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# ***Patterns***

**Twenty-seventh Edition**

**SEASHELL**

**Cover Design**

**Claire Edwards**





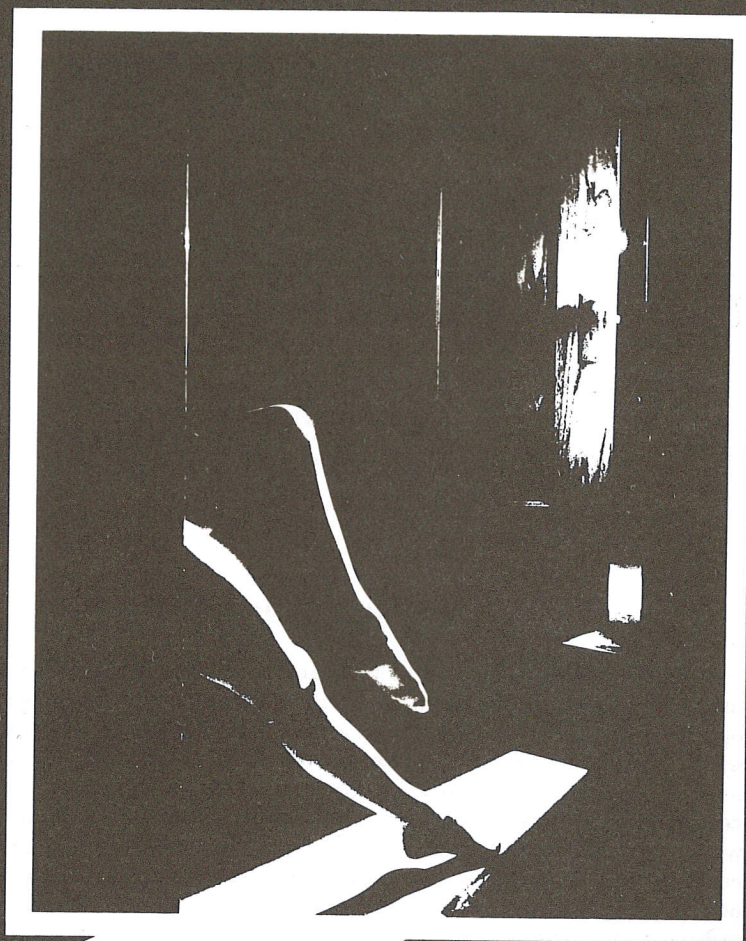
The 27th Edition  
of  
**P A T T E R N S**

A Publication of  
St. Clair County Community College  
Port Huron, Michigan

**PREFACE**

We live in a world filled with chaos and confusion; we seek through the many forms of communication to bring order out of chaos, understanding out of confusion. Student authors and artists at SCCCC once again share with us their views and observations of the world in which we live. They give us the opportunity to pause in our busy, stress-producing lives and to consider the values and goals we have both in our personal and in our working lives. Some of their work recollects memory; some contemplates contemporary conditions; some envisions the possibilities evolving out of others. All reach out to touch us, to communicate the joy and wonder, the ordinary and obvious, the sorrow and futility of being merely human. They tell us who they are or who they would like to become. They show us who we are.

The students selected represent the many who submitted work for consideration; in publishing their work, we recognize also the others whose voices and views are not included. All, however, in some way, make a difference — whether that difference reaches many or only a few. The ARTS ALIVE! focus at the college, begun in 1984, is part of that difference through its continuing belief and commitment to the significant importance that the visual, literary, and performing arts have for us all.



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First Place Honors

Robert L. Mack

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ARTS!  
 Alive!



# FRIENDS OF THE ARTS — PATTERNS

Last year the Friend of the Arts — *Patterns* served as the nucleus for a broader supporting group of benefactors for the total arts program at the community college. ARTS ALIVE!, a week-long celebration of the arts in November, 1984, set the tone for a vital on-going commitment to the many and varied expressions of art on our campus. In May, 1985, with the generous contributions of Chuck and Betty Muer, the first Friends of the Arts' Brunch was held at the River Crab in St. Clair to cap the first year of our unique college and community efforts to promote and support the arts programs and activities at SCCCC. With deep appreciation for their support of the Arts and their belief in artistic expression and its importance in education, we present to our readers . . . our distinguished donors, our patrons, and our friends.

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## LIFE AFTER KIDS

First Place Honors

by Colleen Baron

A major turning-point in parents' lives occurs when all the children have left home. It is said to be a traumatic time. We had heard and read so much about the "empty-nest syndrome;" would we fall victims to the ailment? Everywhere we went, friends complained vociferously about how lonely and dull their lives were since their precious babies had left home. Some even went so far as to say that now they'd just sit and look at each other because there is no longer anything to talk about.

We were flabbergasted. It was beyond our comprehension that life after kids was so devastating, especially when we were in the process of coping with the antics of three normal, active teenagers. Frankly we were looking forward to the time when we'd be free of all the hassle. We dreamt of the days when our telephone receivers didn't appear to be a part of the kids' heads, the gas tank of the car wouldn't always be empty and we could actually get into one of our two bathrooms when we wished.

We learned in a hurry that it wasn't acceptable to mention that we eagerly looked forward to the day when our beloved offspring were out on their own. Folks responded to us, not only with raised eyebrows, but with absolute horror. What kind of monsters were we? How could we ever say, much less think, such a terrible thing? After all, life without the children around was empty and meaningless. They predicted that someday we'd regret our evil thoughts. We always looked at each other and shook our heads in disbelief. Were these the same people who were tearing their hair out a few short years before because sons were drinking or staying out too late, and daughters were skipping school or dating boys that Mom and Dad couldn't stand? How soon they forget.

Our attitude towards the empty-nest phase was formulated many years ago when our kids were small. During a sermon in church, the priest mentioned that our children aren't given to us, they are loaned to us by God. In essence, we merely guide them through childhood to maturity and then our job is done. When they all leave, it would be time for us as a couple again. It was a beautiful thought, so we looked forward to a supposedly difficult adjustment period with a positive attitude.

We enjoyed our children tremendously. Not that things always went smoothly. We had as many problems and upsets as any other family, but the good times far outweighed the bad. Family life was important to us, and even though we did most things as a group, we made sure that there was time for just my husband and me. We were a couple in the beginning and we realized there would be just two of us again later on. We never relinquished our rights and needs as a twosome or as individuals.

Within a two year span, all three children married and left home. Two of them within a four month time period. We went from chaos to quiet in a hurry. It was a radical change. Here it comes, we thought. Will we or won't we experience the empty nest syndrome? It never happened.

For the first year we and the kids viewed our new freedom as a second honeymoon. Our youngest daughter, who has an avid sense of humor, sent her letters to us addressed to the "Newlywed Barons." The mailman must have thought she'd flipped out. The "just-married" novelty has worn off, but the magic in our relationship has not. It's really much better than being newlyweds, because we don't have all those big adjustments to make. We understand and are tolerant of each other's foibles. We accept and overlook habits that used to drive us nuts. All the stresses and strains, that are so much a part of building a life together, are light years behind us.

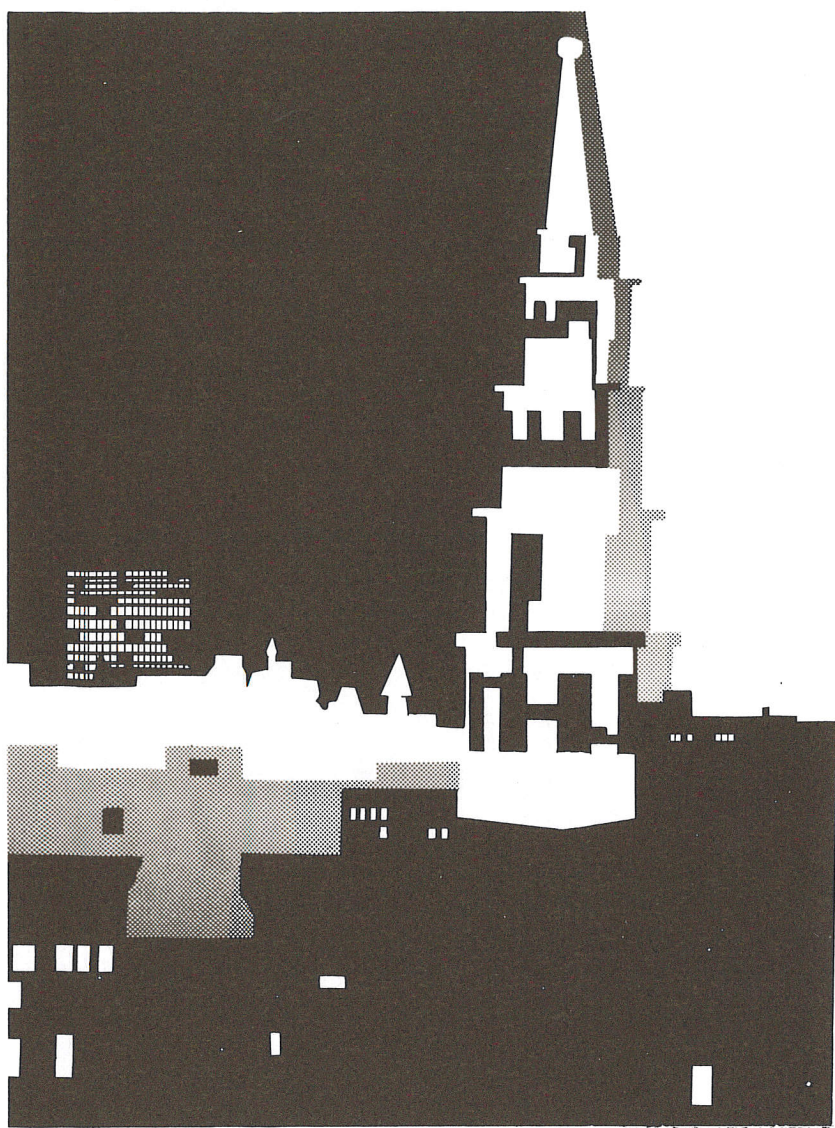
This turning point in our lives brought joy and happiness far beyond our expectations. It's been a time of renewal and discovery. We never lament that we have nothing to say to each other. We talk incessantly, and there's no one to interrupt and distract us. We have more time together now than we had the previous 25 years, but it seems like it's never enough. We're closer to each other now than at any other time in our marriage. A love, that we thought had reached its pinnacle long ago, has been growing at an astronomical rate.

Do we ever miss the kids? Once in a while. Would we want them back? No way. Would we like to turn back the clock? Under no circumstances. We enjoy our children's company, now, as equals — as adults who are free and independent. We believe the feelings are mutual. We are blessed. God gave us enough common sense to choose how we wanted to view life "after kids" and the wisdom to prepare for it with happy, positive anticipation. The last few years have been the best years of our marriage.

## LIFE

by Elisabeth Knapp

Life  
Comes to me  
In tiny revelations  
Flashing inside my head,  
Illuminating the darkness and  
Lighting the way before me;  
Enabling me to take  
A few confident steps forward  
Before the brilliance fades  
Leaving me  
To stumble on and make my way  
In the dark



**STEEPLE**  
**James Pettengill**





**FIELD OF WHEAT**

**Third Place Honors**

**Lory Sheets**

# THE GUILT OF JOSEPH K.

First Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

"Every word, twisted in the hands of the spirits . . . becomes a spear turned against the speaker" (Glatzer, 229). This quote is from Franz Kafka's last diary entry made June 12, 1923, a year to the day before his death from tuberculosis. By examining this final statement and his own interpretation of *The Trial* especially the final chapter, the reader can come to terms with the message left behind by this most extraordinary of modern European writers.

The story of Joseph K. in *The Trial* is the story of one man's search for justice and his slow awakening to a sense of individual and universal guilt. It is as much Kafka's personal odyssey as it is K.'s. Throughout the book, K's actual crime is never mentioned, his accusers never revealed, the Law hidden away in musty crowded attics, justice unattainable. K. travels through time and space in a surrealistic world, probing and searching, questioning and doubting. The entire tone of the book is one of stuffy, choking, inescapable doom.

No wonder, then, that K. is not surprised when two strange men appear at his door, a year after his arrest. They are dressed incongruously in top hats and are clean and scrubbed; they look like anything but the executioners K. knows them to be. He has been expecting them, though they are not what he expected. While previous officers of the court have counseled, threatened, pleaded and preached, these two do not speak. The time for words is over. The effect of their silence is to make the reader immediately aware of K.'s fate long before it occurs. They have no need to speak; theirs is another purpose.

While still in his room, K. looks out into the dark street and sees in a lighted tenement window babies playing, reaching out to each other with their little hands but unable to move. It is important that the reader keep track of just what K. sees in this final, critical chapter, for every vision is of the utmost importance in teaching K. what it is necessary he learn before he dies.

These "tenth-rate old actors" have come to finish him off "cheaply" (280), and K. begins to realize his insignificance before the Law. In contrast to his easy arrest and trial, his apparent freedom throughout the book to come and go, question and beleaguer, K. now is grabbed forcibly, bodily, "in a fashion he had never before experienced" (281).

Although it is a dark night, the moon is up, helping to light K.'s way to death and symbolically helping him to see more clearly what it is he has to do, what his fate is going to be and why. Underway with his captors, firmly held in their grasp, K. thinks he sees Fraulein Burstner. He is "not quite certain" (282) it is she, but it does not matter. This apparition makes him realize "the futility of resistance" (282). He is no hero; there is now no reason to snatch at a last appearance of life by struggling, he who has all along denied life, had immature relationships with



women and authority figures alike, a lone, lonely man with no wife, no children — alienated. K's vision of Fraulein Burstner reminds him of his unnamed guilt and that to struggle now when he has denied life for so long is futile, senseless. "Am I to show now that not even a year's trial has taught me anything?" (282).

Now "grateful" (283) for his captors, K. takes the lead, dragging them through the town. He first follows the girl to keep firm in his mind the meaning of his vision, turns a corner, rushes ahead, and finds himself along with the two executioners in a stone quarry on the very edge of town. The moon is clear and serene: if this were a movie, we could see the dark, stark lines of the uncut stones and the three men making moving shadows among them. One of the strange top-hatted men strips K.'s upper body of his clothes and takes care to walk K. up and down to keep him warm in the chilly breeze, while the other searches out a spot. They lay K. down against a loose boulder, and he is now suddenly like a doll, "contorted . . . unnatural-looking" (285). K. no longer appears human; his body refuses to be relaxed, natural; any attempt on the part of the other men to make it so just makes it worse. K. can no longer maintain the illusion of humanity.

One of the executioners opens his frock coat and removes a weapon. They are going to kill him with a butcher's knife. How appropriate: K. is to be slaughtered as an animal, not a man. The two pass the knife back and forth in a silent ritual, and K. perceives "clearly" (285) that he is expected to kill himself.

But he cannot. The God who made him too weak to join in the ordinary life of mankind has "not left him the remnant of strength necessary" (285) to take his own life. Although K. glimpses the nature of his guilt in the moonlit quarry, still his mind searches for someone else to blame, a scapegoat other than the one leaning half naked against the cold rock.

As if to punctuate K.'s enlightenment, a casement window opens upstairs in the adjoining house and a *human* figure stretches out both arms. It is this word "human" that gives the reader the final clue to why K. is going to die. Kafka used that seemingly unnecessary word here to accentuate the vast distance between K. and other men. K. sees the figure but is unable to act, either to offer help if that is what is required, or to ask for assistance, if that were necessary. He is trapped in his own immobility, his mind racing with unanswered questions, more doubts. K. searches in himself for some "argument in his favor" (286), some unshakable logic that might save him even yet. He raises his hands and spreads out all his fingers symbolically opening himself to another, but it is too late. One executioner is at his throat, the other turns the knife twice in his heart. "Like a dog!" K. says (286).

And indeed, K. has been slaughtered like an animal; his great sin, his guilt revealed in this ritualistic act, for he is not human, is not of humanity, has lived obsessed with his case and his guilt, withdrawn from man. The distant, dreamlike figures in this last chapter haunt the reader and K. alike, as they haunted Kafka. Could he have been redeemed by love, by a woman, by children, by a life such as ordinary men live?

It is a question the reader finds himself asking, as Kafka certainly intended him to do. Just as Franz Kafka learned of his own weaknesses and feelings of guilt through writing out his secret thoughts and nightmarish inner vision, so the reader is left to examine his own life and values, to question whether the redemption he seeks will come, and if it comes, will it, as for K., come too late? As the knife

twisted in the heart of K., as the words of Kafka twisted within his tortured spirit, so the story of *The Trial* writhes and twists in the mind of the reader. Is this prophecy or warning? In K.'s final words do we hear a deeper message: "Go back. This road leads nowhere."

#### References

Glatzer, Nahum N., Editor. *I Am A Memory Come Alive: Autobiographical Writings by Franz Kafka*. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.

Kafka, Franz. *The Trial*. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1969.

## ONLY 10%

by Petra Lynn Dickerson

It's sad, you know, to realize  
How little we all know  
About the things above us  
Level or below  
The things that make us worry  
The things that move our soul  
The ways of other countries  
Statistics on a pole  
Of our brain; miraculous  
We use only 10%  
We could all improve immensely  
If information went  
From one ear through the other  
Leaving fragments in between  
Enhance imagination  
Set the spirit free and clean





UNTITLED  
Vicki Rogers

# METAMORPHOSIS

Tied for First Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

The caterpillar has no song  
He's just an ornate crawly thing  
Who nibbles on the garden leaves  
And never has the time to sing.  
He whiles away the summer hours  
Intent on eating all the flowers  
And does his many-footed dance  
Destroying the tomato plants.

He knows that autumn soon will come  
Silencing the insect hum;  
The birds will go, the wild geese fly,  
And all the lovely roses die.  
Then he will wind himself a bed  
Hanging from a slender thread;  
Winter's cold and bitter winds  
Will rock his cradle 'til it spins.

All winter long he will be sleeping  
Secure in Nature's watchful keeping.

And now it's Spring! The robin's here,  
The garden is all buzz and bee;  
The tulips and the daffodils  
Are lifting up their heads to see  
The caterpillar slowly waking  
Unfolding his newborn wings to dry.  
He stretches them up to reach the sun  
And there he goes. "Look! I can fly!"

Ah, Nature's metamorphosis.  
Which one of us has never known  
The chill that winter winds have sown?  
Yet all the while the wind is blowing  
Deep inside a secret's growing;  
Soon we'll feel our hearts sprout wings  
In celebration of the Spring.

Oh, who among us would deny  
The miracle of the butterfly.

## PREY

Tied for First Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

If there's a life past death then let me be  
Numbered among the hawks should I return  
To soar and glide in splendid majesty  
Among the clouds as summer's bright rays burn  
The hayfields dry. The thermals aid my flight  
Holding my outstretched body from the ground  
While screaming from the still ascending height  
I fill the air with cries heard miles around.  
Or if not this, then make of me his prey  
Crouching beneath the waving grasses, still;  
Hearing his cry a meadow's length away  
Knowing his only purpose is to kill  
And rend my raw and bleeding flesh, which dies  
To fuel his power and glory through the skies.

## ULYSSES LIVES AGAIN

### by Captain Morgan Howell

(Ed. note: Captain Howell graduated from SCCCC in May, 1985, with an Associate of Arts degree and with the distinction of being, at age 81, the oldest graduate from the college. His career, in which he is still active, is as an international shipmaster and pilot. In his treasured log of memories from his years at sea are those days spent with Jacques Cousteau. The following essay was written for his English 102 class shortly before his graduation as he considered the classic poem, "Ulysses," written by Alfred Lord Tennyson and the modern-day hero, Jacques Cousteau, and his crew aboard "The Calypso." Captain Howell did not submit his work for consideration to *Patterns*, but it is submitted to the readers of *Patterns* as a special feature.)

Jacques-Yves Cousteau has lived every line of the outstanding poem, "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson, and his good ship Calypso is the modern-day vehicle with which he has already sailed beyond today's horizons into many a golden sunset and has bathed under the blanket and silent glory of the western stars. His grey spirit and scintillating eyes yearn "to follow knowledge like a sinking star, / Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought" and to reveal the mysteries of infinity.

Argonauts that we were and kindred souls of the same intent, we embarked on the noble craft Calypso and, having received our blessing from the Oracle of Delphi, sailed gloriously through the Gates of Hercules and westward ho, past the Isles of Orpheus. No rocks, no storms, nor any dangers encountered during our epic voyage of discovery would ever equal the imminent dangers and near disaster of our good ship Calypso, as we passed the enchanting Isle of Orpheus. Only with firm intent to return and bask in the bliss of this heavenly Shangri-la, the nymphs of man's desire, were we able to circumvent this utopian island and navigate a safe passage.

Horizon after horizon faded into infinity as we sailed into each golden sunset. At times the Hyades vexed the seas which defiantly rose in violent anger, and we were sorely stressed but, with indomitable spirit, pressed on, knowing with confidence that each obstacle and reversal would grant us greater fortitude. We were ever conscious of the blessings of the great Oracle of Delphi.

We cannot discount but that we are a part of all that we have met, yet all experience is as a shining rainbow from which gleams that untroubled world that fades into oblivion forever when we move. "How dull it is to pause," how disastrous to



accept an end, "to rust unburnished" and "not to shine" in some useful endeavour for all.

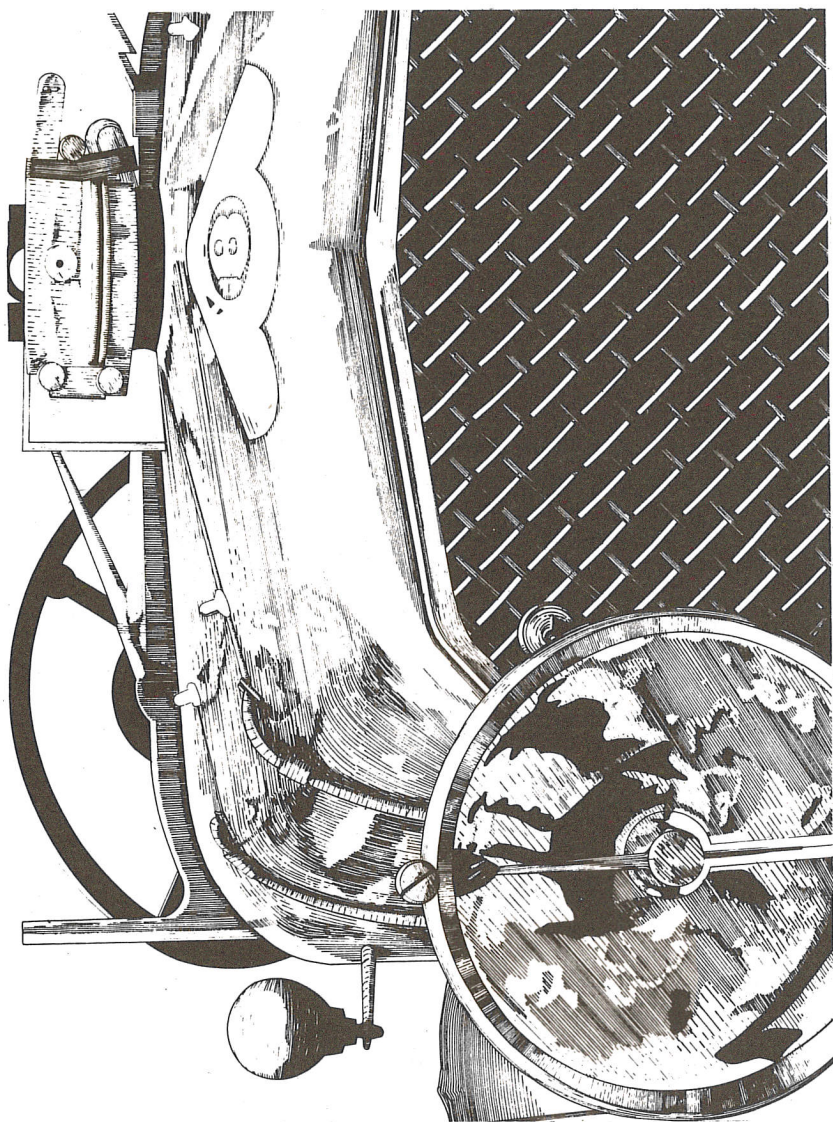
Our voyage is great; it has no bounds between the sky and the dismal deep. Our good mariners descend into the black depths of the western sea. Great mountains are revealed, yes, and great aquatic forests of immense vegetation. Great schools of fish are everywhere like colonies of moving armies and in greater flocks like birds of the air. Ah, here is the substance of our quest! This revelation of limnological abundance will indubitably support and supplement our dwindling worldly food supply; we give credence to the Oracle: To learn our earth, we must learn our seas.

As we advance ever westward, still greater mysteries of the abysmal deep are revealed: great thermal springs producing beneficial chemicals, and minerals of every known and unknown and stranger types are in abundance and at greater ocean depths than the heights of Mount Everest in the Himalayas. The Oracle had predicted such a revelation to us; how could we ignore his prophecies! Calypso pushes still westward ever following the golden sunsets and now the painted Aurora Borealis by night. We climb the staircase to the skies; our good ship steers eagerly for the land of Gitche Gumee and the big blue shining waters, happy to shed its briny barnacles to the might inland seas.

Still more adventure lies ahead as we explore the frigid waters of the mighty Superior, who never gives up its dead. Our trusty crew descend far below the strated thermocline. Submerged mountains are everywhere in this mysterious darkness. Wrecks of ill-fated ships are lying at every angle. Dead men who never abandoned their posts are entombed, yet still faithful to their uncompleted mission. "Death closes all," but something near the end, some mark "of noble note may yet be done, / Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods."

The Oracle of Delphi must be fulfilled.

Our light grows dim, but we shall pass it to some worthy soul with "equal temper" and heroic heart, "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield," undaunted to the end. Our great voyage of discovery with Calypso has taught us that we will understand how simple this universe is when we recognize how strange it is — world without end.



**BENTLY**  
**Paula Elston**

## FALL

Second Place Honors

by Roberta Leuth

There is a sugar maple tree  
In the pasture where the horses graze  
That catches the light of early September  
And bursting into outrageous blaze  
While the woods are still green  
And imprisoned in summer  
Trumpets in the fall.

Trumpets to the purpling sky  
To the birds now noisily forming flocks  
The clouds of starlings, the raucous crows  
Winding their migratory clocks  
Time to go, time to go  
And echoing all along the woods  
The wild geese call.

## POST EQUINOCTIAL

First Place Honors

by Ross Starkey

The old bull swam slowly on through the night, hugely and powerfully, but not ungracefully. He knew that it would not be long before great mountains of ice filled the water and he reached the old bachelor pods to the north. He knew that he would spend the rest of his life there, and the prospect chilled him.

He had left his harem voluntarily but, according to custom, when he had been defeated in ritual combat by the largest of the young males of the herd. He knew that the young one would make a good leader, but he was depressed by his defeat all the same, for he knew that his life was almost over.

Sounding off the underwater terrain to fix his position, he swam to the surface to blow and to fix his bearing by the moon. He knew the date, for the moon had gone through one and a quarter phases since the autumnal equinox, and he knew the time from his internal tide-sense. His massive brain took all these factors into account, and he made a course correction of a few degrees.

He found himself wondering, as he often did, what kind of beings inhabited the moon, and wondering as well at tales of men climbing aboard huge silver birds, which he knew were not birds, and riding columns of flame and smoke into the sky.

He wondered if it were possible that the reason there were no more surface ships was that the men who rode them had left the water for the sky. He had seen men, in their machines, in the sky once before — on the worst day of his life — and he knew that the machines exhaled noxious fumes into the air. It was the only explanation he could think of for the way things had been for the past week, but it was still a great mystery to him.

The air and surface water did not hurt as much at night as during the day, but they hurt all the same. Chastising himself for his absent-mindedness, he dove to cold waters.

His eyes stung, he had a bad taste in his mouth, and his skin was uncomfortably clammy and painfully sensitive to his old battle wounds.

Suddenly dizzy, and not knowing why, he found himself remembering the last giant squid he had caught, two days before. He had almost been killed in that battle, and he knew that it would not be long before he could no longer feed himself, and his body would rejoin the food web.

Automatically scanning the depths, he sounded off a school of deep-swimming fish. He knew that he would spend more energy chasing after them than he would get from their fat, but he dived at them anyway, out of boredom.

Coming back to the surface for a fresh lungful of air, he saw that storm-clouds had covered the moon, and he was discomforted by their angry purple glow. He hurriedly dove back into the blackness.



Later that night, he vomited his meal.

Early the next morning, the old cachalot heard the chattering of an orca herd, and he swam near them for the company. After exchanging pleasantries, he asked of the leader where all the men had gone. The orca replied that he did not know, but that he had seen one of Man's underwater vessels a week before. The larger whale asked the smaller one to tell him the story.

One week before, the orca pack had been hunting seals far to the north, and they had sounded off one of Man's submarines a kilometer distant. The orcas had approached within a respectful distance of the sub, just within sight — for they used their eyes more than any other whale — and watched the submarine rise to clear green waters.

They had never seen one of these machines in shallow waters before — its element was the depths. Yet, there it was.

The orcas floated for a few moments, watching. Suddenly, in a series of operations that confounded the whales, rows of wide holes appeared in the topside of the thing, and out of each hole a long, silver cylinder shot up and lit the water with flame — a ghastly, unreal flame, as if the water itself were burning — and the orcas poked their heads out of the water and watched the missiles climb into the sky and disappear.

When they checked again, the submarine was gone. The orcas left rather hurriedly themselves when they tasted the water downstream of the sub.

A short time later, an explosion of unimaginable magnitude had rocked the depths.

As they swam together in the cold waters of the deep, the old cachalot pondered the orca's story. He had heard the echoes that day himself; he had thought it was a seaquake. He wondered what could have caused the explosion; he wondered what the silver objects, so unlike birds, had been, and whether there had been men inside; and he wondered when the orca leader told him that every member of his pack, himself included, suffered from the same sickness as the older, larger whale, and that several of them had died.

Floating along in the blackness, the old whale was wondering once more if all of the men had gone into the sky, or to the moon, and he was coming to believe that they had. He regretted it, in a way, for despite all the terrible things that men did, he believed that they were fundamentally good. The old bull also knew that Man was the only other species of intelligent animal on the planet. But, he admitted to himself, he would be glad to see Man go, for all the awful things he did — and once again, against his will, he found himself remembering the most terrible day of his life, with every detail intact, and with much pain, for the ten thousandth time.

The speedboats and helicopters came from the south, making much noise and commotion. The short, yellow men on board drove them forward until that pod's leader knew with a terrible certainty that they were to be trapped and killed. In the confusion, the leader ordered the females and the calves to disband, but he was too late.

The boats came from all sides, and as the terrified, bewildered cries of his companions sounded and their bodies exploded around him, the young bull, two other calves, and a single female escaped the carnage as the trap closed and the water boiled red around them.

The cries of terror of his old pod still echoed in his mind.

For the past week, the waters had been silent, and he could hear with unrivaled clarity across the oceans. There had been legends of such times, but the suddenness of it frightened him.

On his way north, the old bull swam within hearing range of a humpback whale. The cachalot wondered why this was the first humpback song he had heard in days.

It sounded like an original song, and as he stopped to listen, the images that were sounded sent a feeling of absolute cold along his entire length.

The images that were conveyed by the singing whale were of the sun appearing directly over, and only a short distance above, one of the large coastal cities to the southwest, hanging in the air for a moment, and then boiling into the sky.

Swimming as quickly as he could, the old bull realized how weak he was. It baffled him, for he knew that he had at least a month's supply of fat. Heading south by southwest, he took three days to reach the coast. It was early in the afternoon when he arrived.

Swimming slowly from his exhaustion, he knew that something was wrong, for he could taste death in the waters of the rivers of the land.

His skin was ridiculously sensitive and the least pressure cause him pain; it seemed to him that every spot on his body was slowly bleeding.

With a great effort, using his once powerful tail, he lifted his head above the water and scanned the horizon.

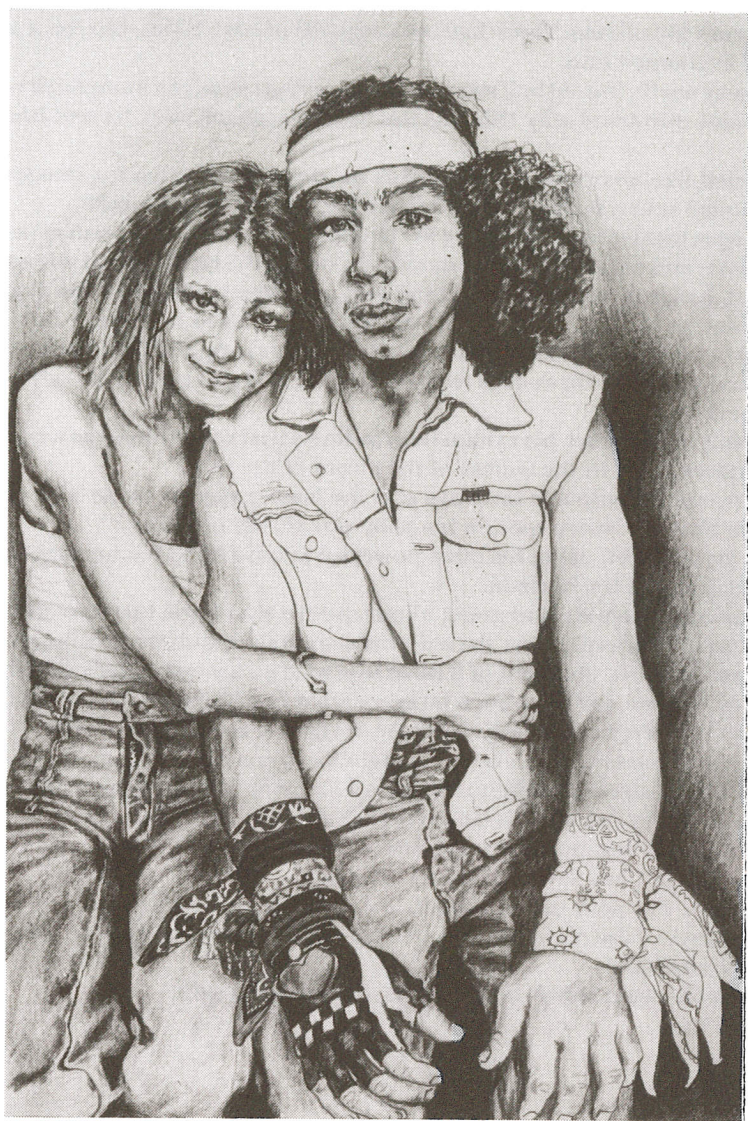
His eyes were burning and going blind, and his mind was blanketed in a red haze, but west of where he was, the old whale could see the charred ruins of one of Man's greatest cities. The sight of it filled him with an icy terror greater than any he had ever known, for all at once he knew what had happened to the men, and with the same terrible certainty he knew the fate of the whales as well.

One last time, his enormous brain brought forth images of the past. He recalled that, as a calf, his sire had told him that Man was not only the whale's worst enemy but his own worst enemy as well. He would cause his own flying vessels to fall from the sky, burning; he would cause his own surface ships to blow up and burn in explosions that had deafened many whales.

Heedless of the pain of the fallout, the radiation sickness, and the intense ultraviolet rays of the dark, red sun, the old whale started swimming westward, toward the shallows.

The old bull swam slowly on toward the long, long night.





**UNTITLED**  
**Claire Edwards**

## SPOILED

Second Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

Peter watched his sister with the doll. It was almost as big as she was. Dressed in pink with ruffles all around the bottom of her skirt and a petticoat whose rows of lace showed below the hem, two pink ribbons tied in her braids, the little girl sat surrounded by torn wrapping paper, tissue and ribbon, holding the new doll in her lap.

"Oh, George," her mother said softly. "You shouldn't have. She's never had anything so ex . . . nice. We couldn't . . ."

"It's all right, Helen," he said. "I wanted to. After all, she's my only godchild and, so far, the only girl in the family. I'd have bought it for my own little girl if we had one."

"Well, maybe Paula will have a girl next time. There's nothing wrong with boys, you know," she said, putting her arm around her son Peter.

There had been only the one box when George had come and Peter had known then there wasn't any gift for him, but he had hoped the present might be something he and his sister could share, like a new game or a croquet set. They played together all the time, and a new game would have been fine. But the doll — well, they wouldn't be allowed to play with THAT.

His father came in from outside but stopped at the kitchen doorway as his mother turned and gave him a quick frown. "When's dinner?" he asked. He stood in the doorway dressed in his shop clothes and an old green sweater with holes in the elbows and two buttons missing. With his old hat on, his head nearly reached the top of the doorway. There was sawdust on his heavy work boots, and he held his large gloves in one hand. He looked over at the little girl holding the doll, then aimed a silent question at his wife.

"Soon," she said. "I'll send Peter out when it's ready." She dismissed him by turning back to her cousin George. She laughed and started to say something when there was a loud banging from overhead. The noise was regular, like the beating of a drum, and the old house echoed the sound down through the walls. "I've got to get the baby and feed him first," she said. Peter watched as she walked quickly out of the room and up the wide stairway. He could hear her footsteps moving along the upstairs hallway and into his brother's room. The banging stopped.

"Daddy says he's going to bolt Billy's bed to the floor," Peter said to George. "Why?" his uncle asked. Peter didn't answer but instead sat down in the big black rocking chair and put his feet up on the worn edge. He rocked the chair slightly and looked at his uncle from under a shock of light brown hair. George was a large



man, as tall as his father, but heavier, more solid. His black hair was long and combed back like a movie star or magazine model. Peter thought he was just about the handsomest person he knew.

His sister put the doll down beside her on the window loveseat, leaning it up against the glass of the window but without touching the long white curtains.

"Do you like your present, Jenny?" her godfather asked.

"Yes, Uncle Gidge."

"You didn't say 'Thank you'," he said, smiling down at her with her feet crossed daintily at the ankle, one little patent leather shoe hanging loose.

"Thank you, Uncle Gidge."

"Well, now, that doesn't sound very enthusiastic," he said. "How 'bout a big hug and a kiss for your uncle?" He reached out towards the little girl.

Peter moved forward in the chair and was about to say something, but George already had Jenny by the waist. He sat her in his lap, where she sat very stiff, holding herself away from him. Peter looked toward the staircase but he could hear his mother still upstairs talking to the baby while she changed his diaper and dressed him for company. He jumped up from the chair and, grabbing a nearby book, hurried to George's side. He started talking as fast as he could about the book, the pictures, anything at all. He looked out the window and pointed and said, "Look at the big black cat," and when George turned around to look out of the bay window into the yard, Jenny slipped off his lap and moved to behind the rocking chair. She looked back at the doll sitting up against the glass with its leg straight out and its head nodding to its chest. She peered through the rungs of the chair at the doll and at her godfather.

Peter stopped talking. He could hear his mother coming down the stairs carrying his brother. He moved back into the center of the room and sat back down in the rocking chair.

"Just let me feed Billy; then we'll eat. Peter, go get your father; he needs to clean up."

Peter got up from the chair carefully so as not to bump Jenny, still standing behind the chair. She had gripped two of the rungs with her hands and had her face pressed tightly up against them.

George picked up the doll and sat on his lap. He turned it so he could see its face, with blue eyes that opened and closed. He leaned it forward, then back, and the doll said "Maa-maaa." Jenny stared from behind the chair. "Maa-maaa." She peered around the side of the chair, then slowly walked out and up to George's knees. Gripping the doll's waist with one large hand, George moved it to the edge of his knees. Jenny reached out and touched the doll's face but didn't try to take it. George reached over and with a quick motion tugged on the ribbon of Jenny's braid. She pulled back and he laughed, a big laugh, and then reached for the other ribbon. But she was already gone, behind the chair holding the untied ribbon in her hand.

Her mother came back into the room. "Time to eat. The baby's in his chair; he'll be no bother now. Jennifer, how did that get undone?" she asked, reaching behind the rocker and pulling the little girl out by her braid. She swiftly tied up the pink ribbon. Jenny's clear blue eyes looked sideways at her godfather.

"Oh, George, you big tease. You used to do that to me, too." She leaned over and gave George a light kiss on his cheek, then walked suddenly away. She took a large

white pinafore out of a drawer in the dining room and put it on the little girl.

"Just like your new doll," she said as she tied the wide sash and fluffed out the ruffles on the sleeves.

At the large dining room table, Peter and his father and his Uncle George sat on one side opposite Jenny and his mother. Jenny sat in the high backed chair stiffly, her hands in her lap, her feet swinging back and forth under the table. She looked at her brother who made a droll face and raised an eyebrow. She held her feet still. Her mother stood up and served each person, doling out each portion carefully from the serving dishes in front of her. She handed them each a plate with the food in bunches around the edge. Jenny looked down at the dish her mother placed in front of her. Except for the vegetable in the little side dish, it was her favorite meal, baked chicken and potatoes with gravy. Jenny smiled at her plate, then frowned sadly at the yellow mess of creamed corn next to it.

Her father began to eat right away, getting up twice to get things from the kitchen her mother had forgotten. George asked him what he was building in the barn, and her father began talking about shelves and cornices, waving his fork in the air for emphasis and twice nearly upsetting his coffee cup. Her mother sighed and, waiting for a break in his monologue, caught George's eye. Jenny saw her uncle wink. They began talking about George's ailing mother, then laughed and joked as George related a funny story about Jenny's grandfather. Her father reached across the table to get more chicken.

"Do you want some more, Jenny?" he asked.

"She hasn't finished her corn yet," said her mother. Jenny's father didn't reply, but Peter said softly, "It's her birthday; she shouldn't have to eat that on her birthday." But nobody heard him except Jenny, who gave him a silent grin from across the table. Her mother went into the kitchen to check on the baby, and Peter reached over and scooped the corn out of Jenny's dish and into his own. He ate as much as he could, making a face as he did so. His father had watched the move and ignored it, neither smiling nor frowning, just staring ahead into the other room.

George was still looking at Jenny's empty dish when her mother returned, this time holding the baby.

"As soon as you're all finished, we'll have dessert," she said. She walked into the furthest half of the front room where she put the baby into his playpen. Peter could hear him crooning to himself and shaking the narrow bars.

His mother went into the kitchen and returned with a large white frosted cake with four pink candles all together in the center. She had lit the candles in the kitchen and the wax was already running down onto the frosting. She placed the cake in front of Jenny, who looked up at the ceiling and then closed her eyes.

"Hurry up and blow them out, Jenny, before they make a mess," she said.

"She's got to make a wish first," said her brother.

Jenny opened her eyes and blew out all the candles at once. Her mother quickly pulled out the still smoking candles and put them in the empty corn dish.

"Well, and what did you wish for?" George asked.

"Gee, Uncle Gidge," said Peter. "You can't tell anyone or your wish won't come true."

"Is that so?" said George. "I bet it wouldn't hurt if she told me, now would it, Jenny? You'll tell me your little secret, won't you, Sweetheart?"

Jenny squirmed in her chair and looked down at her plate.

"Come on now, tell your Uncle George. It won't matter."

Her father stood up abruptly. "Got to get back to work," he said and, walking quickly through the kitchen, he put on his old hat and the green sweater and went out the door.

"Why don't you all go sit in the parlor while I clean up," Jenny's mother said. George wiped his mouth on his napkin and returned to the loveseat next to the doll. Jenny and Peter sat at the table picking at their pieces of cake.

"Go on, now," she said. "Go keep your Uncle Gidge company."

The two children moved back into the front room, Peter to his perch on the rocking chair, Jenny behind him. They watched George as he looked around the room and moved nervously on the loveseat. He got up suddenly and walked in to look at the baby in his playpen, but Billy was lying on his back with his eyes closed and his thumb in his mouth. George came back into the other room and stood looking out the bay window with his back to the children. Jenny's mother came back and took her by the hand.

"You haven't said a proper 'thank you' for the doll," she said.

"Oh, yes I did," Jenny said quickly, trying to pull away.

"Well, I didn't hear it," her mother said.

"That's okay," George said. "Come on up here and give me a big hug and a kiss and we'll call it even." He reached out and grabbed Jenny and plunked her down on his lap. The little girl pulled away and looked down at her feet, hanging helplessly over his heavy knees. George pulled her closer and tried to turn her head by pulling on her braid.

Her mother took a step forward. "Don't, George, she isn't used to . . ."

"Strangers," he said. "Well, Uncle George is no stranger, is he, Sweetheart? Just give him a big thank you kiss and the doll is yours. That's all, just a little . . ."

Jenny shoved against his chest with all her might and squirmed out of his grasp. She tugged at her dress and pinafore and felt for the ribbons in her hair. Peter had stopped rocking in the chair and the baby was asleep. The room was suddenly very quiet.

"Why don't you take your new doll outside to play," her mother said. "Put on your sweater; it's cold." She took the doll from her mother's hands and ran into the kitchen where her red sweater hung on a hook in the big closet next to the door. She put the doll down on the toybox under the window and started to do the buttons, one by one.

From the other room, she heard her godfather talking loudly. "Well, I don't care about that. I say she's a spoiled brat." Jenny couldn't hear her mother's reply, but she knew by the sudden silence that something had been said. "Nonsense," he retorted, "She's just plain spoiled."

Jenny grabbed the doll and ran out the door, leaving it swinging open behind her. She ran down the porch steps, across the sloping lawn and down behind the lilac bushes. Stripped of their leaves by the fall winds, they didn't offer their usual haven, and she turned at the bottom of the hill and ran all the way to the fence in the corner of the yard. She sat with her back to the cold wind and held the doll tightly between her chest and her knees.



Two big tears rolled down her cheeks, but she didn't make a sound. It was very cold and the light sweater was no protection against the harsh November wind. She stared back up at the house. She could hear the whine of the saw from her father's shop. She saw her brother come out of the kitchen door and go into the barn. In the big bay window she could see her uncle and her mother standing slightly apart. Her mother was gesturing with one arm while she held Billy on her hip. The baby was pulling at her hair and she kept brushing his hand away.

George turned away from her mother and looked out the window. Jenny got up and moved away out of sight. Still grasping the doll, Jenny moved along the fence, looking down over the white palings to the narrow alleyway eight feet below. There were all kinds of rubbish at the bottom — rocks, tin cans, a dead crow, withered tree branches, broken slate tiles from the house below Jenny's.

Suddenly, Jenny held up the doll without looking at it and flung it down over the fence. She closed her eyes and reached out and grabbed the narrow fence posts.

"M not," she cried out, "m not. No. Not spoiled. He doesn't know."

Peter stood beside her. He saw her tearstained face and runny nose, the red sweater buttoned up askew. Then he followed her eyes through the slats of the fence to the broken doll lying face-up among the debris.

"Maybe it's okay," he said. "I'll go down and get it. You stay here."

He looked up at the big house, then climbed carefully over the fence and went down the wall with practiced hands and feet. At the bottom, he picked his way along the alley to where the doll lay on its back. He lifted it up and the back of its head fell and lay in pieces at his feet. The doll's dress was covered with dirt and wet leaves. He carefully picked up all the broken pieces and put them in his jacket pocket.

"I can't climb back up with it," he said. "Can you reach it?"

Jenny stuck her arms through the bottom of the fence slats, but she couldn't reach the doll as he held it up over his head.

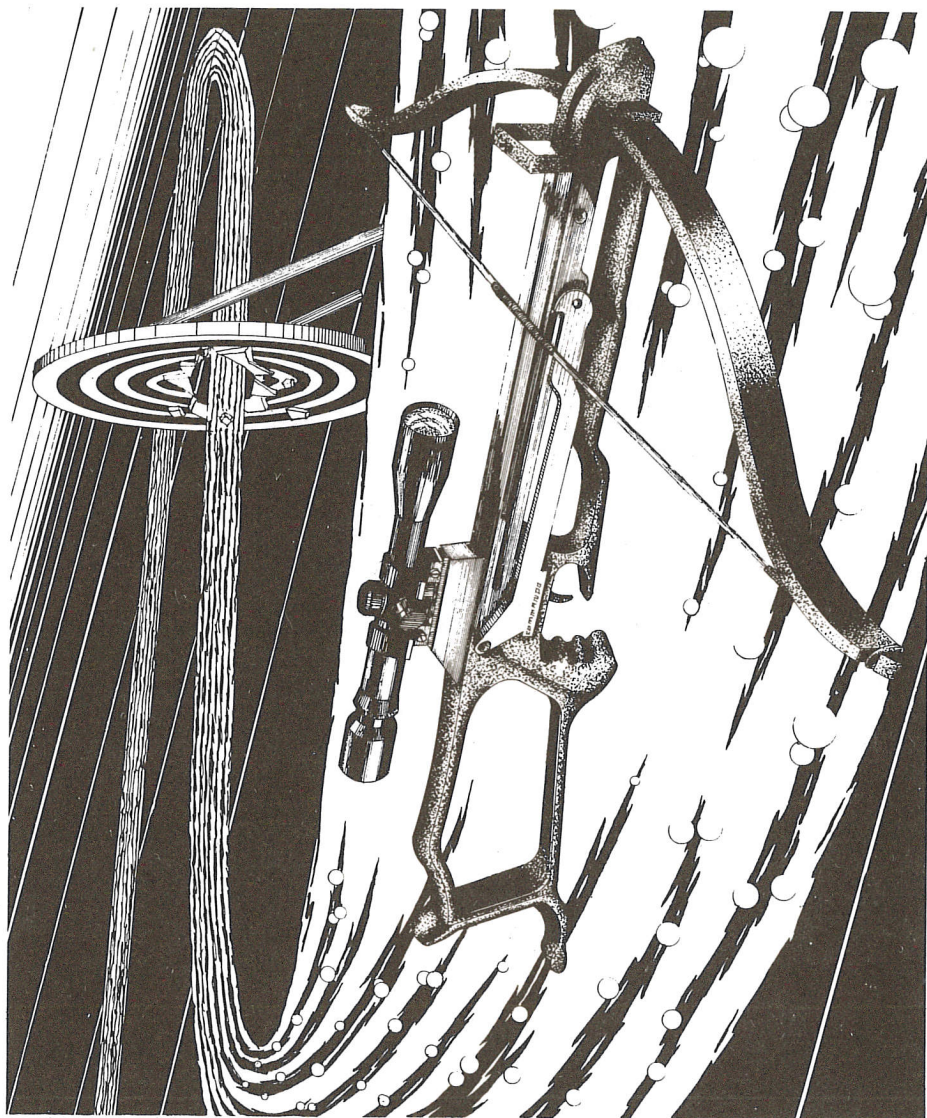
"Never mind, Jenny; I'll go around. You stay right there." He backed out of the narrow alley and headed down the neighbor's driveway. A few minutes later he climbed over the low stone wall at the end of the yard. He walked over to Jenny and sat down beside her. The doll lay on the grass at their feet.

"It was an accident," he said. "You were playing, well, walking it along the top of the fence, and it fell. I'll tell it."

They sat there with their backs against the white rail fence looking up past the lilac bushes to the big white slate shingled house. It was too early for the lights to be on and all the windows echoed the same blankness in the late afternoon gloom.



**COMMANDO**  
Second Place Honors  
**Robert W. Paul**



## A VISIT

by Melissa Cope

It was Christmas season and anyone in the vicinity would have known, not only by the inches of snow on the ground but by the numerous shoppers marching up the street keeping step only to the gusting winds that allowed them half a block before blowing them back to their original place in the crowd. It was about six p.m. and all the stores had turned on their Christmas lights. Looking in any window, one could see the clerks busily selling and wrapping gifts for the customers buying last minute items.

Down the street there was a restaurant doing a booming business. It was filled with shoppers of all ages who had stopped in to rest their feet and to warm their bodies with a cup of hot chocolate and with businessmen who had stopped for a drink before going home to the holiday chaos. There was one waitress, a tired haggard-looking girl, who flitted from table to table trying to keep the customers content and succeeding for a moment before a new demand was placed upon her.

"Excuse me, miss, could I have some more coffee?"

"Just a moment, I'll be right with you."

"Annabelle, you would think they'd hire someone who could work faster. But then what can you expect from anyone who would take a job like this."

What could you expect? Lisa wondered to herself half an hour later as she collapsed into a chair at the departure of the last customer. She had been waitressing now for five years, and it was always the same thing at this time of year. Crowds of people filling the place, making demands. They were never satisfied. Christmas spirit? There was none, never had been. It was all one big gimmick. "Buy the biggest, greenest, most realistic artificial tree you have ever seen." All commercialized, every ounce of Christmas, there was really no use for it except to make money. No one cared about anyone except themselves. With that thought in mind, Lisa let out a faint moan.

"Something wrong?" questioned a voice from behind her.

"Oh gosh, you startled me, Dan. I didn't see you there."

"That is probably because you've been lost in your own thoughts. Well anyway, I'm done cleaning up and am going to leave if you are through here, or are you waiting for someone?"

"Me? No. I mean, no, I'm not waiting for someone, and, yes, I'm leaving now."

With that she put on her coat and slid out the door just behind him, turning to look it. She turned back around, surprised to see Dan still standing there.

"Lisa, would you like to walk home with me? We go about the same direction."

Lisa hesitated for just a moment. As tired as she was, she had no desire to go

back to her empty apartment. She answered with a solemn "all right."

"I have a few errands to run," he added quickly.

"I'm in no hurry," was her reply.

So they started walking down the streets already covered with a light powder from the fresh snow. They walked on in silence down the already emptying streets. After about a block, he motioned to her and led her quietly into a store, and so the process continued store after store. It would have been quite a spectacle to see. Two people fading into the shadows at every doorway and each time emerging with more packages. But no one was on the street to enjoy the antics of the couple. The late hour and the cold had sent everyone home in search of warmth and rest.

By now the atmosphere had become gay and almost childlike. Lisa was really enjoying this man's company, and every now and then he would ask her advice.

"Do you think an eight year old boy would rather have a truck or a basketball?"

"Definitely a truck — that blue one right there!"

As they left the last store, a grocery store, where they had just finished piling a cart full of good food, Lisa turned to Dan.

"Excuse me. I don't mean to pry but just how big is your family?"

"Don't have one."

"Then who are . . . ?"

"Shhh — here we are."

He led Lisa up the steps of a old rickety house. He pushed open the door and was greeted with a hug from a middle-aged woman and a chorus of hellos from the many children. The woman had a warm, almost pretty, face that glowed as she stretched out her arms beckoning them into her home. The room she led them into was small, and the furniture was old and worn. The walls were covered with Christmas decorations that were obviously homemade. Lisa began to think of her own apartment. The furniture was in better shape, but somehow she envied this home.

"I thought you didn't have any family?" Lisa whispered.

"I don't," was his reply. "Everyone, this is Lisa. I'll be right back."

With that Dan left shutting the door behind him. By the time Lisa had been seated and given hot tea, Dan had returned carrying an armful of wood. He lit a fire, and everyone gathered around it. They even sang Christmas carols. All too soon it was time to go. They gave hugs all around and headed down the sidewalk, waving until the house was just a tiny speck, oblivious in the darkness of the night. They walked in silence until they reached the house Lisa lived in. There Dan turned to her and said, "Do you still think Christmas is a waste?"

A waste. A waste. His words rang through her head. Isn't that what she'd been thinking all week?

"Who were those people?" she asked in reply.

"Her husband died last year, and she can't get a job because someone has to look after the children. There is no one else. They live on what the government gives them, but it isn't enough so I try to help.

"And they love you so much for it."

She watched his face, looking for what she was not sure. Perhaps smugness or even pity but she didn't find either. She had been staring at him sometime, lost in her own thoughts, when he spoke again.



"Well, goodnight and Merry Christmas."

With that, he was down the stairs and out into the night before Lisa had a chance to say anything more.

Lisa awoke late the next morning and had to rush to get to work on time. The day was one of the busiest, December 24th. But the work seemed to go faster than usual. Soon it was time to close up. Mr. Farley, Lisa's boss, began sweeping the floor.

"Mr. Farley, where is Dan? Isn't he coming in today?" Lisa asked.

"Funniest thing happened. I tried to call the number he gave me to see if he could come in early, but the operator cut in and said there was no such number. I thought maybe he just gave me the wrong number so I drove by there on my way to work. But the address he gave me was the address of an abandoned church. It didn't look like anyone had been there in years. Guess he was a drifter, though he never asked for a cent; just free meals was all he wanted for his work. I guess it was just time for him to move on."

"Probably. Mr. Farley, can I leave now? I have some very important errands to run."

Lisa was out the door almost before Mr. Farley could say yes. But now halfway down the block, she spun around and ran back to the restaurant. She pushed open the door.

"Mr. Farley?"

Yes, Lisa?"

"Merry Christmas."

## ANOTHER SNAG

by Ann Master

Mark came home from work that evening and met his father in the driveway, loading things into the car.

"Hi," said his father, as Mark walked up the driveway and past him.

"Hi," Mark replied and continued up the porch steps.

"When can you be ready? In about fifteen minutes?" asked his father.

"Yeah, fifteen minutes," answered Mark over his shoulder as he opened the door. Shutting the door behind him, Mark met his mother coming out of the kitchen.

"He's been getting ready for this all day," she said with a nervous laugh.

"Really," Mark said rather surprised at the fact that this trip meant so much to his father. But as he thought about it, somehow it became less surprising. They hadn't been fishing together since Mark was nine years old. Maybe it was about time that they try it again.

"You're still going, aren't you?" Mark's sister asked.

"Yeah, I'm still going. Why?"

"Oh, I was just afraid you'd come home and say you had changed your mind, and then I would get to go fishing," she said in a tone which harmonized with his mother's laughter.

As Mark showered and changed, his father lashed the canoe to the top of the car. He packed the poles and the tackle box securely in the trunk. The cooler he placed at Mark's feet.

Within half an hour, they were afloat upon the peaceful waters of the deep and silent lake, their poles extending into the water over opposite sides of the same canoe, the cooler between them as they drifted. The silence surrounded them.

Mark spoke. "Think we'll catch anything this trip?" he said casting his line into deep water.

"Hope so," his father said. "It's okay if we don't though. There's always next time . . . Right kiddo?"

"Right," Mark replied flatly.

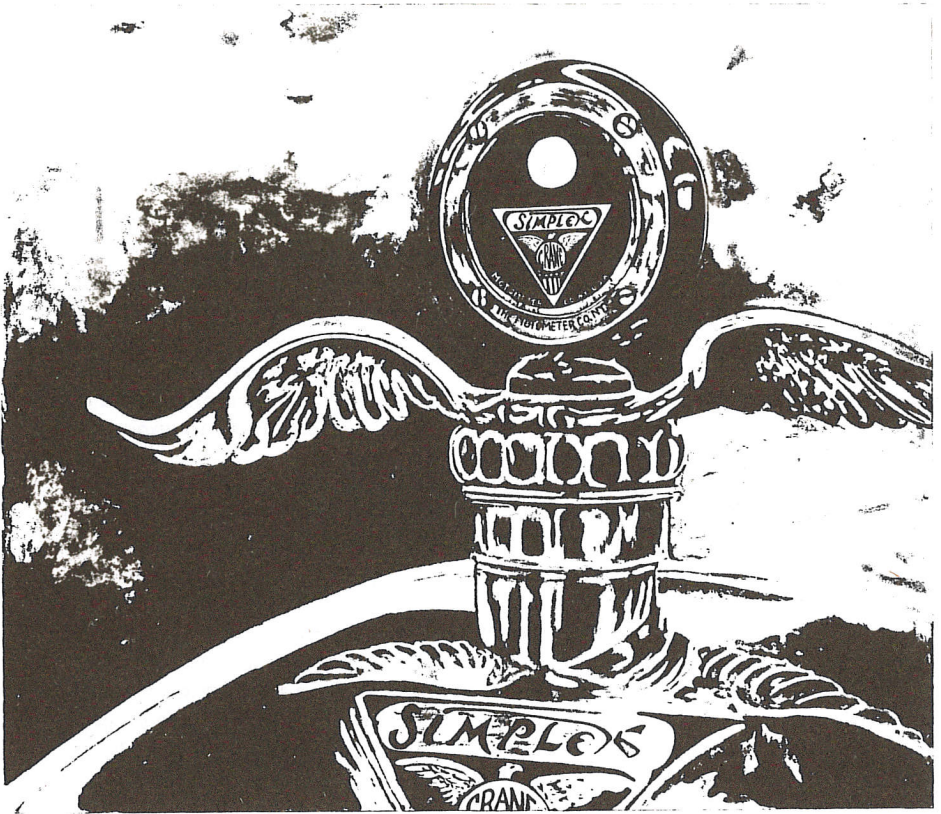
Mark saw his father reach for the cooler, but just then he fancied he felt a tug on his line. In his excitement, he imagined the twenty-inch walleye dangling at the end. "That certainly would be something," he thought. "After all the years of catching nothing and coming home with a catch like that . . ."

Mark reeled in his line expectantly, but as it broke the surface, he realized what he'd thought was his prize catch was nothing but a long, green piece of seaweed. Removing the worthless piece of slime from his line, he looked up to see his father finishing off yet another can of beer.

"Want a beer?" his father asked.

"No, I do not want a beer," Mark replied.

Mark set down his pole and took in the scenery of the lake. It had lost something, something essential to fishing. The lake was no longer peaceful, only silent. But this time Mark did not speak.



**SIMPLEX**  
**Linda Harmon**



## ON JOHN CHEEVER

Second Place Honors

by Christine Schiappacasse

After reading "The Enormous Radio" and "The Swimmer" by John Cheever, I found the characters and the telling of each story to be decidedly similar in several ways. In both stories, John Cheever makes a statement about upper middle class values and the impact those values could have on some people. The characters in both are brought from oblivion and unawareness to the brutal conclusions of reality. Furthermore, John Cheever's use of symbolism effectively depicts this journey from fantasy to reality by using unreal events to uncover very real problems.

In "The Enormous Radio", Jim and Irene Westcott are carbon copies of all of the people that live around them. Everything they do appears to be in good taste. They have the proper number of children, an equal number of material possessions, a seemingly stable marriage, and they attend "the theatre on an average of 10.3 times a year . . ." (858) Jim and Irene should be quite happy.

In a like manner, Cheever's character in "The Swimmer," Neddy Merrill, also appears to be quite happy and prosperous, surrounded by a beautiful wife and four daughters, lounging next to a swimming pool that on another day could have been his own, reminding himself of the many friends he had, and appearing quite self-confident. As we are told by the author, "the impression was definitely one of youth, sport and clement weather." (867)

So what is wrong with these two perfect pictures?

As the reader quickly sees, both characters are so involved with appearance and money that they never take the time to develop those qualities which would be more valuable to them as complete human beings — qualities such as compassion, truth, self-esteem, or the development of sincere honest relationships. Instead, Irene and Neddy equate material possessions and appearance with self-worth and that is why both characters are so devastated in the end. John Cheever shows the reader the hypocrisy of this kind of superficial life and the importance of examining some of the values society considers significant.

In "The Enormous Radio," Irene Westcott walks around in oblivion, not wanting to face the truth, believing she is better than everyone else. When she realizes the radio is eavesdropping on all the apartments around her, she is almost addicted to listening but at the same time very depressed from listening. Were the conversations too close to her own reality and that reality too gruesome? Irene cries to her husband, "Our lives aren't sordid, are they, darling?" (865) She is pleading for a kind lie. Her husband pacifies her for the moment only to mercilessly blast her

at the end with the blunt truth. "Why are you so Christly all of a sudden?" (866) he yelled as he proceeded to spew forth all sorts of improprieties that she had done. He accused her of stealing her mother's jewelry, holding back money from her sister, and having an abortion. "You packed your bag and went off to have that child murdered as if you were going to Nassau." (866) Incredibly, Irene's major concern from this assault on her character is whether or not other people could hear their argument through the radio. "Please. They'll hear us . . . The radio." (866)

Neddy Merrill of "The Swimmer", unfortunately, suffers from the same state of oblivion. He sees himself welcomed by his friends, loved by his wife, in control of his mistress, "a pilgrim, an explorer, a man with a destiny . . ." (868) Maybe he resembled that sort of a man when he had money but without it, he was nothing, or so he and his so-called friends believed. Neddy cannot bring himself to accept that he no longer has money, family, or friends, and so he must try to swim home to the place where he thinks he will find all that he once had. When he finally comes to the end of his swim, he comes to the shocking realization that all he possessed was, in fact, gone. "He shouted, pounded on the door, tried to force it with his shoulder, and then, looking in at the window, saw that the place was empty." (876) Since Neddy's strength of character is suspect anyway, the reader gets the feeling he will be making that swim again and again.

Cheever uses a radio in one story and a swimming pool in the other as vehicles to drive his message home. Even though it is not feasible that a radio would broadcast other people's business or that a man would swim from pool to pool to get home, these fantastic events effectively show the realities that the characters have trouble facing.

In "The Enormous Radio," the radio appears to be sent to show Irene how the world really is — how she really is. It "stood among her intimate possessions like an aggressive intruder." (859) The radio was there to show Irene and the reader how really shallow this class of people could be, so consumed with money and appearance that they would steal and cheat. Even in the end, after the radio was fixed and Irene turned to it for a kind word, "The voice on the radio was suave and noncommittal. An early-morning railroad disaster in Tokyo, the loudspeaker said. . ." (866) as if to tell Irene she could no longer turn her back on the truth no matter how unpleasant.

In "The Swimmer," the swimming pool is the symbol of the affluence of the upper middle class. The water changes color depending on what part of town Neddy finds himself. For instance, when he made his way to the Recreation Center, the pool and water "stank of chlorine and looked to him like a sink." (871) Neddy "thought that he might contaminate himself — damage his own prosperousness and charm — by swimming in the murk . . ." (871) as opposed to "the sapphire water at the Bunkers' . . ." (871) This definitely alerts the reader to the apparent attitude held by Neddy, and those people like him, of money and status. It is not necessary to believe that the character actually swims from pool to pool. In fact, as the story unfolds and the cruel realities become clear, the reader no longer concerns himself with the feasibility of it all but only admires the way in which Cheever makes his point. Cheever, through his use of the swimming pool, brings us on the same journey that Neddy really took — from prosperousness or seeming success to rejection, bitter denial and emptiness.

"The Enormous Radio" and "The Swimmer", through the use of symbolism, show us the hypocritical views our society may harbor and the harm it can do if one invests too heartily in those beliefs. The characters, when slapped with reality, still remain unenlightened and seemingly unchanged. Irene is still looking for that kind word and worrying that their argument will be heard through the radio, and Neddy, so devastated by the loss of money, is not sure of anything. The state in which the characters are left drastically emphasizes the futility of this kind of superficiality.

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Cheever, John. "The Swimmer." in *The Story And Its Writer*. Ed. Ann Charters. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. (867-876)

## NUMBERMANIA

by Craig Lewandowski

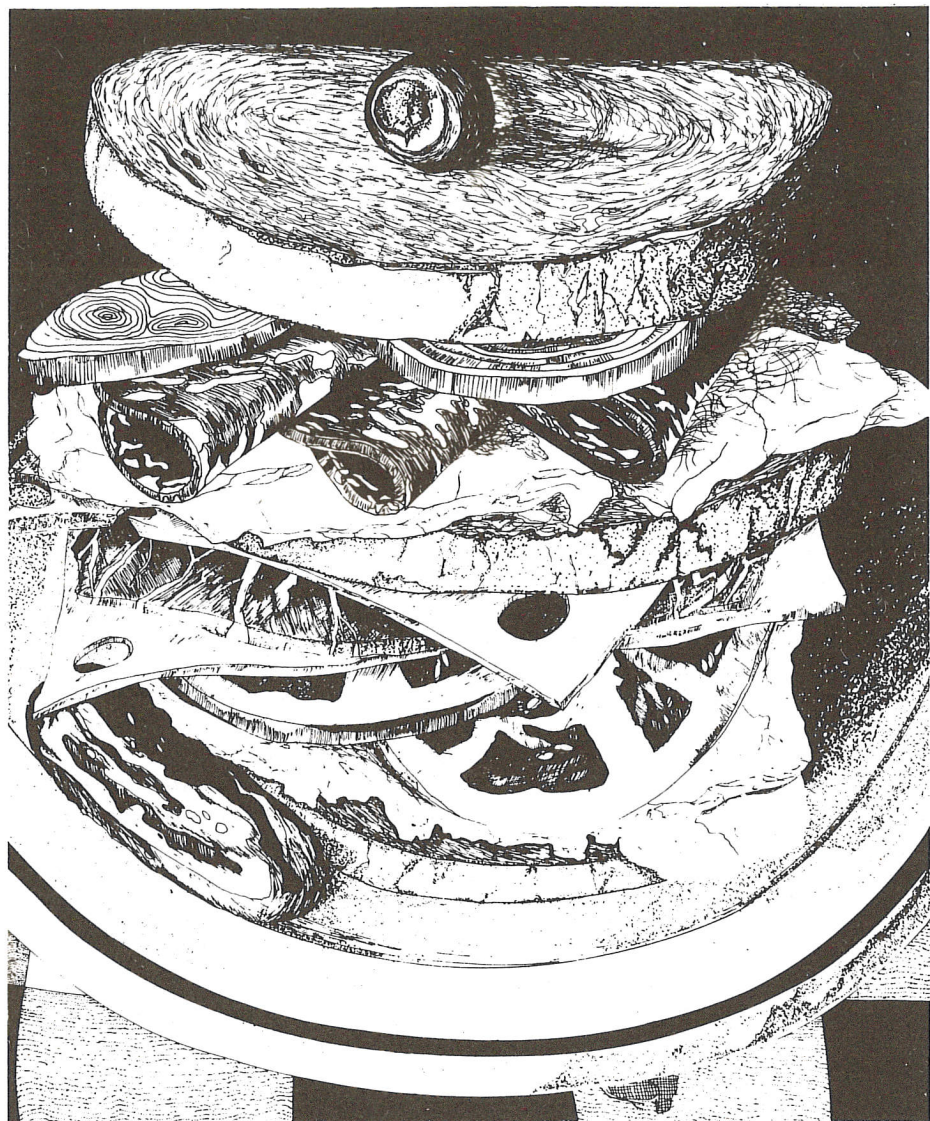
Number 28920, you got an "A" on your biology test. Social Security number 371-92-9965, we hope we're deducting enough money from your paycheck. Clock number 122, please dial 18 or go to room 14. Call 377-4865 for an appointment. Number 1148265 is buried in section 8, plot 164.

Numbers and more numbers,  
Until the time we're dead.  
Who needs to be called by a name,  
When you've got a nifty number instead.

Feed the system and call your number,  
Stand up and recognize the count.  
Get lost in the scratch of pencil and paper.  
Watch as the figures begin to mount.

The human race is a numbers race,  
Our world will never be the same  
Just categorize me with the rest of the numbers,  
And forget that I ever had a name.





**SANDWICH**  
**James Pettengill**

## A TIME OF MADNESS IN SOCIETY

Tied for Second Place Honors

by Geri McGill

In a little gray house heated by an old fashioned coal stove sits Jenny, the daughter of an exslave, born in Virginia in 1881. Jenny's face lights up as she talks about what God has done in her life and how strong she leans on God. While she talks I see the tiredness in Jenny's face under the crop of snow white hair that crowns her frail face. She is small built but strong in character. Jenny said she's proud to live in America and hopes that young people really start thinking about what it means to live in a free country. She has her freedom and intends to keep it.

"Oh freedom, freedom, freedom over me. Before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave and go home to my Lord and be free."

Here echoes the cry of negroes from the past as they came in chains from Africa. Recalling the past can be enlightening, stimulating and sometimes sad. Nevertheless there are times when we must look back to whence we've come to be encouraged to press forward. Before me sits a woman of great strength, wisdom, beauty, and courage. Together we implore you to travel back through time with us to a plantation in Virginia. It was an era of madness, a time for fear, when lives were filled with misery and pain — a time of madness in society . . .

"I jest been remembering bout de ol' plantation days; dey was some scary days. Fetch my shawl, chile, I get cold jest thinking bout dem days. I gwain tell do story; it hopes a lot fer me to tell yaw. It hopes me to know what freedom is really like. I remembers my mama putting me and my little sister on a boat from Virginia and hiding us up de Mississippi River. Dey was rioting and killing up colored people jest to be killing dem. Oh, it was bad that so many peoples died jest because of being different.

"It was a hot sultry night as I lay on my bastard bed in Virginia, my body sweating like I'd been swimming. I looked cross de room and my little sister Maggie was sleeping so sound I thought to myself, how could she lay dere in all dis heat. In the next room I could hear my daddy jest a snoring from a hard day's work in de cotton fields, mama slept quiet, restless but quiet. I could hear de ole frogs croaking dere song. I was happy den; I was twelve years ole. We had nice masters; they didn't whip us. Master John and Miss Jane treated us well, always gave us clothes to mama.

"Maggie and me went to de creek next day. We had fun catching butterflies and all. All of a sudden mama come running to de creek telling sister and me to get home fast as we can and stay till she come for us. She never said why, but when her



and paw came home later I could see they was worried. I heard paw tell mama 'we's got to think of the chil'en, Saddy. What's gwain happen to dem?' Little did I know dis would be our last night together as a family forever. But for some unknown reasons tears came to my eyes as I lay on my bed. I waked up early de next morning to hear mama's voice fearful. She was shoutin', telling me to rise and get Maggie dressed. Mama rushed into de room and take me by de shoulders and like in a whisper, 'Jenny, I wants you to listen and listen good, you hear? I could see my mama was scared, I ain't neber seen her like dis before. All of a sudden I felt sick to de pit of my stomach. She went to de window like she was looking for someone. Then she came to me and gave me a pillow case filled with food enough for me and Maggie. I asked her why she gave us food in a bag, but she said, 'jest hush and listen to me. Baby, you must pay attention, we got to get to de woods and stay dere till night.' She pulled us close to her and hugged us real hard. I could feel her hot tears as dey dropped on my cheeks. When she let us go, she rose and put some clothes in a bag too. Without one more word, she took our hands and ran from de house towards de woods.

"Suddenly I heard a noise sounding like thunder. I stopped to look up, but mama jerked my hand and told me, 'Don't look back; hurry, chile, jest keep running.' We run like the demons of hell was after us. When we got to de woods and what looked like a cave, Mama pushed us in and crawled in behind us panting so hard I felt she was qwaina faint. Finally she said, 'we'll wait here till dark and den move on down de river.'

"Mama held us close to her breast and whispered, 'Try to sleep. De angel of de lawd will take care of us.' But it looked like I hadn't closed my eyes good when I heard the same noise. Mama grapped us up and we was off running again. It was so dark; the only light we had was the moon. At last we reached de river, and I looks and saw heaps of colored folks coming out de woods. Dey was running fast. It seemed like de whole world was coming to an end. De peoples was screaming cause of guns shootin' at us in de background and farms was burning. Mama jest kept running with us and crying. At last we made it, as I looked through sweat-covered, tearstained eyes, I seen de ole steam ship Paw used to bring Maggie and me to once and a while ta watch him load cotton. Ma put us on dere and de last words I heard Mama say, 'Jenny, look to de Lawd and de Lawd will look after you and Maggie.' She kissed us and ran from de boat. I never seen my ma nor pa again. After Maggie and I got to Alabama, two white men came and took us to an ole shack. They took Maggie from me and sold her to another family. I never seen her again. I went through three masters before I met my Grady. We jumped over the broomstick into marriage and de Lawd blessed us to have four chillun. I loved my Grady; he was good to us. He always told me stories to make me laugh.

"I heard my Grady screaming. I run to de house but I was too late; dey had beat my Grady and hanged him to a tree cause dey said he stole some chickens. I fell to de ground screaming for my man, but it didn't help none; dey had killed my Grady. Now all I had left in de world was my chillun.

"I guess de Lawd felt I had suffered enough cause I kept all my chillun. We had a plenty hard times, but we made it through de stormy days. If it wasn't for de Lawd, I don't know what I would have done to keep my mind together. When I think back to dem days, and all de things we had to go through, I knows dere is a God that sits high and looks low. Yes, I seen some bad times with my people being whipped to death for nothing and then hung on a tree. When I seen Dr. King on television and



the dogs running after my people, I relived dem nightmares all over again. Why do dey keep hating us so, and when is it gwanna end? We's is de only people who was told not to remember our way of life in de ole country.

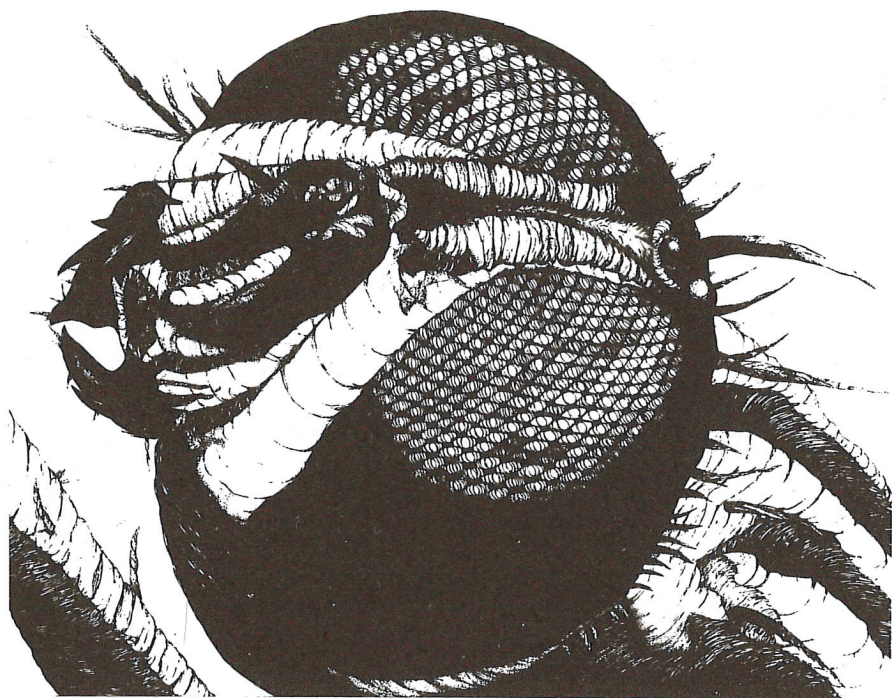
"Dey even wouldn't let us keep our own language. We had to forget it or be beat to death. I doubt if these younguns really know what freedom's like. When I heard Dr. King talk, I got excited. God has sent us a deliverer. Then dey shoot him down like an animal and ended that dream. But old Jesse Jackson, bless his heart, the Reverend keeps on telling us that if we can only believe, we is somebody. So I'll keep on dreaming that things gonna get better and better for my people. I use to hate white folks for what de did, but if I say I love God and Jesus whom I ain't never seen, I can't hate cause God is love. I'm tired now, chile, I'm gonna take me some sleep."

The Negro slave, denied an education, dehumanized, imprisoned on cruel plantations, knew that in the north existed a land where a fugitive slave could find freedom, if he could survive the horrors of a journey.

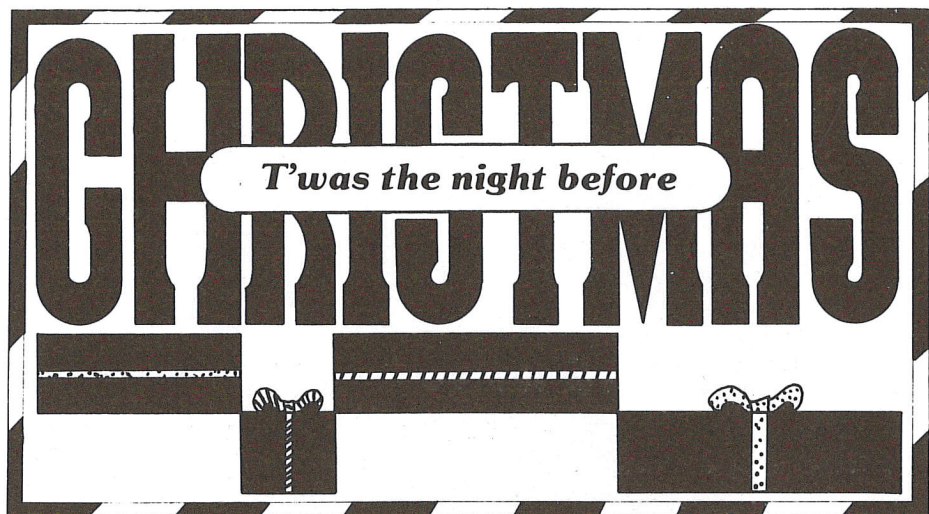
Today when progress seems abruptly stalled and hope withers under bitter backlashing, we Negroes can remember days that were incomparably worse. In the past our struggle had two phases. The first phase began in the early 1950's, when we slammed the door shut on submission and subservience to conditions in the United States; we demanded our citizenship. When we boycotted buses in Montgomery, demonstrated in Birmingham, defied guns and dogs in Selma, some white people tried to stop us by threats and fear tactics that once worked so effectively. But nonviolence stopped the guns and Negro defiance had shaken confidences. When some whites decided to return nonviolence with the violence of guns, dogs, and clubs, the whole world saw the sickness displayed on television. This uncovered the conflict and revealed who was the evil doer, and who was the undeserving victim. The nation and the world were appalled, and national legislation wiped out a hundred southern and northern laws that slashed holes in segregation. Those were days of victories, when Negroes and whites came together and collaborated for human dignity.

The Negro revolt is evolving into more than a quest for desegregation and equality. It is a challenge to a system that has created miracles of productions of technology to create justice.

Since February is the month of Black history, a time set aside to pay tribute to Blacks who pioneered to where we are today, I pay honor to one in the struggle. I commend Miss Jenny for her perseverance and her faith in God and for sharing with me the wounds and bruises she received in conditions like slavery. In light of her testimony, she has strengthened my commitment to continue in the struggle of human rights. Nothing can undo the suffering and injustice done to Miss Jenny and her family. However we can remember the struggles of all the Miss Jennys and continue to work together as one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all, to stamp out seeds of hate and plant continously seeds of love.



**GUESS WHAT?**  
**Paula Elston**



**CHRISTMAS [Night Before]**  
**Todd McCallum**



# THE IMPOSTER

Tied for Second Place Honors

by Shirlee Meyers

My daughter is missing! Almost overnight, time very unfairly struck from behind and with no warning stole my little darling with the long golden hair. She was a cute little girl who loved frilly dresses and helping me in the kitchen. She played with dolls and always picked up her toys. That little girl has disappeared, and an imposter has taken her place.

The imposter resembles my daughter, but she's very different. She wears jeans and sweaters instead of dresses and tights. Although her closet is overflowing, she insists she never has a thing to wear. In fact, her closet overflows onto her floor, her bed and her desk. I distinctly remember seeing a bed in her room, but I'm not certain where she sleeps amid all that clutter.

I've noticed other things. The imposter has vast knowledge about a wide variety of subjects. She believes I know nothing. My suggestions are met with a withering gaze. She no longer likes to help me, and she feels any household task is a punishment worse than death. She spends more time in her room. If the house is shaking with the latest rock tune, it's a good clue that she's home — somewhere. My bathroom no longer contains toys for the tub. Instead it is littered with bubble bath, electric curlers, and the latest issue of *Teen Magazine*.

She already has her two front teeth (orthodontically straightened, of course); she doesn't like dolls anymore; so, all she wants for Christmas is her own Princess phone and private line. I stopped laughing the day the telephone began ringing constantly. At least, I no longer have to rush to answer it. I've learned it will never ring twice. The early callers usually want to know what she's wearing to school. She attends a Catholic school, and everyone must wear a uniform, but they like to be certain. Later in the day, some of the voices on the other end are definitely male. Fortunately, she no longer hates boys, and she will spend hours discussing their merits with her girlfriends.

My hair is turning gray.

In spite of all this, I have to smile when I see the changes in her. Those same changes that gave my own mother sleepless nights are now affecting me in the same way. I'm growing. I've discovered life isn't a straight line at all. It's a giant circle, and our viewpoint depends on our point on the arc. I find myself telling her the same old things my mother told me. I must remember that I thought those timeless ideas were hopelessly old-fashioned twenty years ago when I viewed them from her side of the circle. Indeed, my daughter's own time has come. She has entered that narrow tunnel of adolescence, and when she emerges, she will be an adult. I can no longer take her hand and lead her on the right path. As she makes her passage, I must try to gently steer her from behind and pray we both survive this difficult time. I watch with pride the young woman emerging from this imposter of childhood behaviors. I watch with pride and, as always, with love.

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# HEAR

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IT SAID THAT CHRISTMAS  
IS NOT THE  
SAME THIS YEAR

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It seems there's something missing

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No spirit and no cheer.

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I wonder if the fabled grinch  
Has finally found a way  
To wipe the smile from children's eyes  
And steal our Christmas day.

There's tension and high prices  
And very little love  
And the hustle and the bustle  
Has turned to push and shove

Drivers line the highways  
Blowing horns and angry shouts  
In a hurry to spend money on  
Those not really cared about.

Why Christmas is a phoney  
With its bother and its fuss  
Buy a card for these folks  
Cause they sent one to us.

The Christmas smells are missing, too  
The trees no longer green  
No more fresh-cut foliage  
Just polyethylene.

A metal wreath adorns the store  
Bathed in pinkish neon glow  
Even Christmas kisses aren't the same  
Neath plastic mistletoe.

What's happened to the caring  
The Christmas love and sharing?  
Can it truly be the grinch has  
Put an end to Christmas giving?  
To the laughter, to the love.  
To the joy of Christmas living?

So I set about to find this grinch  
Who spoils our Christmas day.  
Who brings to Christmas emptiness  
And chases love away.

So I traveled all directions  
Through the frenzy and the fuss  
And I can truly say  
I've found the grinch.  
And, dear listener, he is us.

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CHRISTMAS POEM  
John Giffer

## WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO BE A HUGGER TOO?

by Alissa Francisco

Although we live in the 1980's, an era of tremendous individual freedom, there still is an obvious reluctance among people to convey their feelings to others. Increasingly, I have become aware of this attitude regarding the showing of affection between friends. Friends are unique individuals who share our lives and are familiar with us in a way our family may not be, and as such we feel close to them and even love them. However, it is as if society shuns contact other than that allowed between couples and the family, for no place exists for friendly, platonic touching, contact which is critical. In fact, certain individuals put up barriers to prevent such contact. When you walk up to negative people with the intent of touching or giving them a hug, you can actually feel a barrier, like an aura, surrounding them and pushing you away, keeping the individual's distance. Some individuals resist being touched and touching on the basis that it has something to do with an intimate relationship. Others feel that it is not allowed or that you are somehow not normal if you touch, and some just think you are crazy. "If you love unconditionally, you must be crazy."<sup>1</sup>

Despite this resistance, I have embarked on a personal crusade to bring happiness to myself and to others by touching. In order to break the barriers of society I have adopted a philosophy of modified tactileness. Modified tactileness is a process of learning to touch others in a friendly, nonsexual way, either to gain pleasure for yourself or to give pleasure and reassurance to others. First brought to my attention by Professor Leo Buscaglia, this philosophy advocates touching others now, and not waiting for the "right moment" because life is too short and there might never be a "right" time to touch someone. "Now's the time. Don't wait until tomorrow to tell somebody you love them," states Dr. Buscaglia.<sup>2</sup>

By degrees I have slowly advanced my philosophy to the point where those that I am close to know I am a "toucher." But it has been, and continues to be, a slow, arduous task. For in addition to the effort of initiating contact, there is the fear of rejection once I do reach out, the fear of someone pulling back and saying "don't do that." Increasingly, though, the hand (or the arm or the hug) that I extend is taken and accepted. "Everytime we put our hand out to someone, we run the risk of being slapped. But we also . . . get a chance of somebody reaching out and touching us in love."<sup>3</sup>

Those that I do touch seem surprised at the contact, but at the same time they find it comforting and enjoyable to be close to someone. The need for friendly contact is immense, but most of us are too embarrassed to be the initiator, so we let the moments slip by when we could touch. For just such a reason, I have



adopted a spontaneous manner. Whenever I feel like touching or hugging, I do. I do not let the feeling slip by. "Show what you feel in relationships . . . Don't wait to communicate your feelings."<sup>4</sup>

Some ideas do not take long to catch on. Even though I have not followed this philosophy long, people have come to expect me to hug and touch them, and on the occasional off day when I do not come up and hug someone that I usually would, they come to me. The need to touch and hug between friends is there. Resistance to touching is an idea perpetuated by a society whose members do not wish to appear abnormal.

Developing mutually rewarding tactile relationships is just a matter of breaking the barriers that surrounds people and daring to get close. We should be close to friends and show them how much they do mean in our lives. By risking rejection we may find complete acceptance and enthusiasm. Become a "hugger" like Dr. Buscaglia and me, and then "you too can learn to touch like you've never touched before."<sup>5</sup>

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Leo Buscaglia, Ph.d., *Living, Loving & Learning*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1982.) p. 207.

<sup>2</sup>Buscaglia, p. 134.

<sup>3</sup>Buscaglia, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup>Buscaglia, p. 164.

<sup>5</sup>Buscaglia, p. 211.

## DITCHING

by John Woodman

Sleek redwing blackbirds  
Landing beacons shoulder set  
Snag cattails to stop

Blackbirds sway midway  
In streams, on lunging brown decks  
That flex and spring them

Up and out in bursts  
That blur the beacons, urgent  
Missions and short flights

Flying with purpose  
And plan; land, nest, fold their wings  
Bend their necks and rest.

## COLD TURKEY

by Margaret A. Kelly

Mozart's *Concerto in D Major for Trumpet and Orchestra* softly fills the room as I read the battered, coverless copy of *A Child's Garden of Poems* by Robert Lewis Stevenson. On my lap is two year old Mark; to my left, snuggled close is four year old Andrew with a pile of books waiting to be read on his lap, and to my right is seven year old David reading aloud with me. Sprawled at the other end of the couch is Daniel, eleven. He is immersed in the latest "Drama in Real Life" story featured in *Reader's Digest*. Suddenly he stops reading and exclaims, "Mom, did you read this? This guy was lost in the woods for three weeks with a sprained ankle and no food or water or anything!" Before I can respond to his question, his gaze centers on a spot in another dimension and I know that HE is lost in the woods battling pain, hunger, thirst and cold. We are reading this evening rather than watching TV because we don't have a TV.

We used to have that mainstay of American life: we woke up with *Good Morning America*; lunched with *Mr. Dressup* and *Loonytunes*; had an afternoon tryst with a variety of adulterous, murderous doctors and lawyers; dined with a variety of adulterous, murderous politicians and criminals; and relaxed each evening with dumb blondes, streetwise prostitutes, corrupt cops and superheroes. Pat and I always felt that TV was a bad influence on our children (we were, of course, immune), and it should therefore be restricted and supervised. Yet, when the children were underfoot or too noisy or required too many layers of clothing to easily push outside, I usually said, "See what's on TV." There had to be something that would tranquilize them. It tranquilized me too when there was so much to think about and do that I would sit before the set instead. It was my drug and we were all hooked.

Cold turkey took the form of a broken set and an empty savings account. We were lost. We were no longer part of American society. "No," we would meekly reply, "we didn't see that show . . . we . . . we . . . don't have a television." We felt impoverished, disadvantaged and martyred.

Slowly we found our way in the "straight" world, the world without television. When the children got underfoot, I found work for them. Daniel and David are learning to cook. "My favorite thing to cook," said Daniel, "is tacos." David's favorite is "no-bake chocolate cookies." When Mark and Andrew hear dishwater running, they pull chairs to the sink; Mark rinses and Andrew stacks the dishes in the dishrack. They have learned to be more responsible for the business of family life; they are the business of family life.

We work together as a family and we play together: Monopoly, Scrabble, Life; Old Maid, Go Fish, Rummy; baseball, football, basketball. The children are learning

the value of money, how to spell and count, and we are all learning the art of losing and winning gracefully. Perhaps the most important activity that our "poverty" has led to is reading.

We read piles and piles of books. Books, along with our own imaginations, take us places TV never could. Where on television can we ride the wind on a winged unicorn, through all the "might have beens," to save the world from nuclear destruction? (*A Swiftly Tilting Planet* by Madelaine L'Engle). Or, suffer the pangs of deciding whether or not to bring our teddy bear on an overnight visit. (*Ira Sleeps Over* by Bernard Weber). Where on television can we learn the beauty of the English language? Nothing can compare with the poetry of Robert Lewis Stevenson or the droll humor of A. A. Milne (*Winnie the Pooh*). "It's amazing," said Daniel, "I can even learn new ways to make sentences by reading to my little brothers."

We have not been martyred; we have been blessed. Of course the kids still get underfoot and noisy, and I get tired of reading aloud. Sometimes the thought of that "fix", the TV, seems very attractive. But I think that I agree with Daniel that "It's a real advantage to not have a TV."





## OLIVER

by Roberta Lueth

The big snapping turtle wasn't in the river that day. I'd sat more than an hour on the tree roots hanging out over the water watching for him. I hadn't even seen a bird I didn't know.

I heard the crows before I saw them and looked up the rise of the ravine to see the great horned owl landing on top of one of a group of white pines high up on the rise and east of the Beech Grove.

Grabbing my shoulder bag, camera, books, binoculars and quickly crossing the old log over the river, I moved across the lowland to directly below the pines. The owl swooped suddenly down and away, across the river, but the crows stayed, circling the trees screaming.

There it was! The owls had been in that area since late winter and I'd guessed they might use the old red-tailed hawk's nest sixty feet up with a view of the whole woods, the river and the long stretch of open fields north to Gratiot.

I couldn't get up the ravine wall from below the trees, so I backtracked over the log, up the steep horse trail to the main path overlooking the river. I was carrying too much gear to take the shortcut through the gully so I kept to the trail and headed south. The pines were no longer visible but the crows were still circling.

I sensed something behind me and turned to see the darker male owl flying low along the river trail. He flew to the large oak that marks the bend of the path, landed silently and turned his head to glare at me. He looked away, took a few steps to balance himself, leaned forward in the direction of the noisy crows and hooted. His cry, so familiar to me from hours in the woods in the cold of winter, resounded through the trees. He hooted again and the crows were silent. He stretched his wide slate-grey wings and turning and plunging in one movement down the ravine, led the crows off east down the river away from the nest. I could hear them shouting down their victim from a half mile away in Boden's woods.

It was impossible, even from nearer the tree, to see if the nest was occupied. Binoculars didn't help — the hawks had built the nest in the topmost crotch of a straight white pine and from the ground only the dark thick bottom of twigs showed through the dense branches. The owls hadn't added on, simply moved in, probably sometime in early March.

But at the foot of the tree was the final sign I had hoped to find — bones. Small white delicate bones, some whole, some crushed. Remains of all she'd fed her young owlets that spring. I collected all I could find, even the dried castings of the adults, marked the time down in my log and headed home, full to bursting with the discovery.

For the next five weeks I was out in the woods almost daily. Some days I could see white balls of fluff high up in the nest, but other days it looked empty. Usually one of the adults was around whenever I arrived. By mid-May the young birds were large enough for me to be sure that there were only two of them. They began tearing the nest apart and were soon perched on the topmost branches of their pine.

It had rained early that Friday morning; I took a quick hike out just as the skies were clearing. It was easy to move quietly on the wet trail. I was watching ahead hoping to see the mother owl and not looking at the path at all when one of the young owls started clacking and hissing right at my feet.

"Well, good morning," I said. "You're all wet." Clack, clack, hiss, hiss. The owl tried to hop behind the tree but he fell on his beak. He struggled to his feet by balancing first on his wings.

By now I had my camera out. He tried to hide under the May apple umbrellas. When I'd used up the entire roll of film, I said "Good-bye" and went home.

When Liz, Krista and Chris got home from school, we all went out to see the owl, who got christened "Oliver" in the well-established alliterative tradition started years ago with Polly 'Possum and Ralph Raccoon. Oliver wasn't pleased to see all of us, but he couldn't do much more than spread his wings and fall over frontwards.

Saturday morning Oliver was still in among the May apples, but by afternoon he had hopped down the path some thirty feet back in the direction of his nest. Now he could hop up and sit on the dead branches a foot or so above the ground. We discovered his brother balanced high in a nearby oak. Roy dubbed him "Stanley" on the spot. Stanley could fly, in the manner of young owls, mostly downhill and with very clumsy landings.

It took Oliver all day Sunday to move slowly north up the trail until by nightfall he was directly under the nest. Monday morning we all five walked out curious to

see where he'd gotten to overnight. We found him on the north side of the big beech that overlooks the snapping turtle holes; he was gazing out over the edge of the ravine and didn't see or hear us until we were only a few feet away. Startled, he spread his wings and glided down the ravine, landing upside down among the dead branches and ferns. He righted himself, then huddled under the ferns in the light rain and turned to look north again. He was now only twenty feet from the water's edge. "Well, should we try to scare him back up here?" asked Roy. "He's apt to fall in and drown."

"If we try to move him and he falls into the river, we'll have to take him home and keep him in the house." Two votes for a great horned owl in the kitchen, three against. We left him where he was.

Tuesday night Krista and I took the small tape recorder out to the woods. We called to the adult owls with the tape and one answered from the northeast. Another owl called from the west, but very far away.

Oliver was perched on a large dead log directly above the water. He began to "squawk," the young owl's call to its mother. Not a hundred yards away we heard Stanley squawk and soon the two were in a furious contest to see who could make the most noise. The mother owl flew in along the river and landed on the very top of a tall white snag only thirty feet directly across from Oliver but fully seventy-five feet up in the air. We could see her clearly outlined against the darkening sky.

We could hear the owlets calling as we headed home.

Wednesday it rained most of the day and I didn't get out into the woods. I walked out early Thursday morning, but looking over the edge of the ravine I couldn't see Oliver on his log. I was only halfway down the slope when I spotted his wings, spread out across the water, only inches from shore. I pulled his body out. Except for the weight of the water, there was almost no substance to him.





**PIPE**  
**Todd McCallum**

## TO BE A MAN

by Scott Klein

The northern wind prowls the hills carrying a chill that sends shivers down the bark of the pine trees in the valley. No birds sing nor are there children here to shout praises of life, just men live here. The men are the keepers of the secrets of life, so it is said. They live in caves, wrap themselves in furs and moan morbidly about the chill that has set into their flesh. The chill feels like slow death, a rot that grows from within and gnaws slowly at their lives.

The men are arranged around an altar of fire trying to beat the cold which cannot lose — winter never ends in the hearts of these men. The wind and snow in this place send a chill through the core of the earth freezing all who dare to challenge it . . . From what bit of time did these images escape? Do these images dwell in the past or modern times or are they visions of what will be? Does the wind, with a cry like that of a woman who has lost her child, blow from the bowels of history? Is it the fate of modern men? Or is this a frosty dream of a day yet to come?

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In a village far beyond the pine forest and the cave palaces of ice and snow, a lad passed into adulthood. He felt like a pebble cast into a sea of mud, sinking in the muck along, desperately struggling for life. He felt like a boy even though now he was a man. He felt lost, so, one moonless night he left the village looking for purpose, meaning, destiny.

The lad bore no sword nor grudge; he wished only to fill the void he felt in his chest. He set out for the hills to speak with the men of the fire, the keepers of the secrets. To be a man, he must travel the road to the caves where the wind cries like a mother mourning the loss of a son . . . he knew to be a man he must go.

From the outside of the circle of men who were gathered around a fire, the lad spoke. "I beg your assistance, I've come to find my destiny." He said, "Can you help me?" Outside the wind screamed in pain as it slammed against the cliff. Green wood on the fire hissed, then popped; a man groaned. "Please, sirs, I've come a long way." The boy listened to his voice echo through the cave. He wondered if they were all dumb.

An old man rose slowly and looked at him sternly for a moment before roaring, "Boy! Where's your sword?"

"I have come for assistance; I need no sword."

"You don't need a sword," the old man said mocking him; the other men laughed loudly. "Boy, the fact is no man can give assistance, purpose, meaning, or destiny better than a bloody sword. This is the truth to live by or die by."

The lad was repulsed by what he just heard. The only thing a sword could give him, he thought, was the stench that hung over these men. They reeked of sweat and suffering and of blood and death. The boy looked at the men wrapped in their furs huddled around a fire. They were cold men, numbed by the weather and life. He could never be like them. Motioning to the men and their surroundings, the boy asked, "Is this what I must do to be a man?"

"Yes."

"Then I shall never be one."

The men took the boy to the top of the cliff where the wind wails. They forced him to the edge; he was helpless with his hands bound tightly behind his back. He stood taller now than he had anytime before in his life. The old man stared into the boy's eyes and without flinching or blinking, the boy stared back. The old man's eyes were as vacant and cold as the rock they stood on; the boy's eyes glittered with a new sense of pride that had swept over him suddenly. "To the gods," the old man shouted pushing him over the edge suddenly. "To your destiny."

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Does the wind, crying like a mother mourning the loss of a son, blow from the bowels of history? Is this a frosty dream of a day to come? Or is the time upon us now, that we must fight or die to be a man? . . .

## TOUCHING

by Alissa Francisco

Touching,  
What a commonplace, involuntary action.  
It leads to friendship.

BUT . . .

He continues to advance,

Step

by

Step.

I've created a monster with my kindness.  
Not sure how to stop him,  
I'm being pursued  
And will eventually fall to ruin at my own hands.





**INTERIORS**  
**Rhonda Holly**



**OLD PAINT TUBE**  
**Lisa Smith**

## COMMITTING AN ACT OF LOVE

by Margaret A. Kelly

Love as defined by M. Scott Peck is "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth."<sup>1</sup> To love in this way requires discipline, responsibility, courage and grace. All these are also essential to good writing. Writing is also "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." Good writing is an act of love.

Good writing is an act of discipline. Discipline in loving entails controlling anger and selfish impulses. It means giving time and energy to those loved. Discipline in writing entails controlling emotions and giving time and energy to the writing. An emotional appeal may surely be made, but it must always be backed by strong, clear logic if it is to be good. The logic must control the emotion, not the other way around. Making the time to write may be the most difficult of writing's disciplines to master. Faced with a due date next week or next month, it is easy to get sidetracked with children, friends, books, TV and many other distractions. It doesn't take much energy to write a stream of thought, but to take the time to organize, clarify and revise those thoughts takes enormous energy. Disciplining one's self to giving so much control, time and energy is an act of love.

Writing is an act of responsibility. The loving person is responsible for his own spiritual growth and is responsible for aiding his loved ones in their growth. The writer takes on the responsibility of clarifying truth to enlighten himself and his audience. He must be sure that his research and facts are correct and that his conclusions are honest. To do otherwise is to mislead and confuse, the antithesis of good writing. Even if he is ultimately wrong, the honest quest and the thought provoked by his writing aids his growth and that of his audience. To accept this responsibility is an act of love.

Writing is an act of courage. To accept the discipline and responsibility of good writing takes courage. Fear of the unknown must also be overcome. In committing himself to paper the writer ventures into unknown territory within and without. Old ways are challenged. The self must give up a vital part for inspection and usually some change occurs. Change is painful. Allowing another to inspect this part of the self, that is, letting someone read the finished essay, invites criticism and possible rejection. Both are extremely painful to endure. Only out of love do the courageous willingly enter into an act that demands discipline, responsibility and pain.

The pain of writing is eased and rewarded by the gift of grace. Dr. Peck partially defines grace as a "... powerful force originating outside of human consciousness which nurtures the spiritual growth of human beings."<sup>2</sup> The inspiration writers

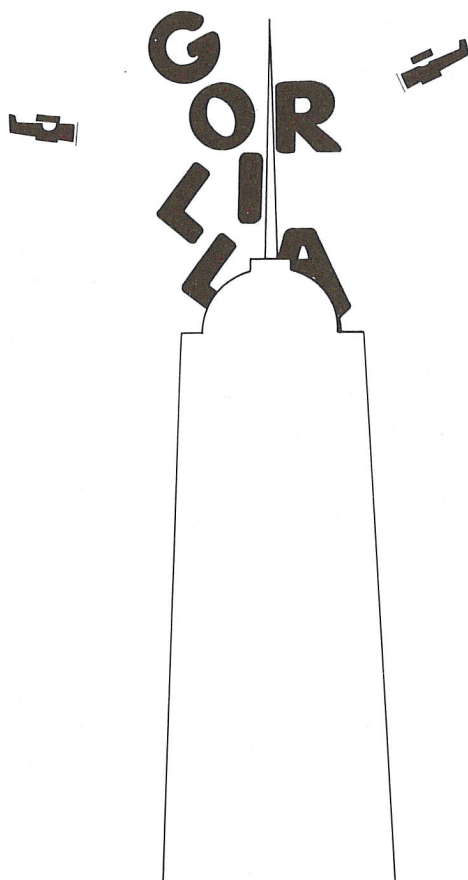


often receive is an aspect of grace. Inspiration is the sudden and sure insight or answer to a problem. With it thought clarifies and truth emerges. The pain is eased and rewarded with that joy that only comes when the expression of thought is right and powerful.

It is this final joy, this gift of grace, that is the reward to the person that loves enough to exercise discipline, responsibility and courage. It is the writer's love of himself and his audience which leads him to exercise these same things in committing the act of writing. In doing so, he commits an act of love.

<sup>1</sup>M. Scott Peck, M.D., *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 81.

<sup>2</sup>Peck, p. 261.



UNTITLED  
John Rich

## MISCELLANEOUS PANDEMONIUM

by Roberta Leuth

Silence gives rise to  
sharp-fanged muzzled demons  
flitting noisily  
willy-nilly  
slamming doors.

Synapses malfunction.

Time and discussion  
disperse them  
but the insidious clock  
and the inability to speak  
solid truth  
the desire to ask  
unanswerable questions  
to promote words  
of reinforcement  
necessarily momentary  
cause confusioned silence

and our geometric desires  
stand frustrated  
while laughing immediate devils  
bellow increasing  
bottomless echoes  
down corridors  
with exit doors  
shut.

## MECHANICS OF FLESH

John Rich





## WHAT SHAPE IS YOUR MEMORY IN?

by Ronald J. Ruzinsky

It's January 1930. A family in Gillespie, Illinois, is relaxing after their evening meal. Seven children are in the house with their parents. Though it is not late, father has long since retired. He needs to be well rested so he can milk cows before going to work in the coal mines all day.

As mother mends her family's clothes by the single oil lamp, the children divide their time between playing and warming themselves by the potbelly stove in the center of the room. The flickering lamp casts its warm yellow glow dancing into the warm yellow shadows, across the room, onto the children's faces, and off into the darkness. The light dances in each child's eyes so brightly that it seems to come from within: like the eternal flame of life itself.

In the kitchen the oldest girl is busy washing the dinner dishes. Carefully she wipes the water from her mother's etched glass fruit bowl and cookie plate. Then, using painstaking precaution, she lifts them high onto a shelf where they will be safe from the scuffling of the smaller children. Heaven forbid that anything should happen to the crystal. They are mother's only good glassware.

In the main room, by this time, the children are engrossed in their play. Their thoughts wander from wishful thinking to balmy dreams and are shattered against the harsh realities that make up part of their daily lives. The boys talk excitedly about Indians and gun-slingers as they play with a much cherished cast iron horse and wagon, a wooden barn and half-a-dozen crippled lead soldiers. In a far corner the dim light falls on the smallest as she plays quietly with her doll. China head, arms and legs mortalize the doll, making it delicate like a real infant. Beautiful glass eyes open and close as the doll is tilted. Blue glass eyes laced with dark lashes are set off with rosy cheeks, dimples, and rose bud lips. Lovingly the girl cradles her prize and gently lays her down in an oaken cradle. "Mama," the doll cries as it is laid down. "Don't cry, baby," the girl gently soothes, "Mommy's here." She draws the doll's quilt up over the doll and begins to sing a lullaby.

In 1968, passersby might have taken in quite a different scene in a big brick farm house on the outskirts of Yale, Michigan. As father reads the daily paper near an electric lamp in the corner, mother is busy washing the dinner dishes. Carefully she wipes the water droplets from her mother's etched glass fruit bowl and cookie plate. Then, before putting them high on a shelf, she stares into their transparent beauty for a moment as though she sees something. Yes, her countenance radiates as, once again, she sees the potbelly stove, the cast iron horse, and her mother mending clothes in the yellow lamp light that flickers off into the shadow of her memory of days long past. The vision fades as commotion in the next room draws her attention. She sighs and places the shimmering objects on a shelf.

In the living room a boy plays with plastic cars and trucks; some wobble hopelessly on three wheels and are prime candidates for the junk. The girls play with their plastic doll's furniture and their plastic dolls: horrible plastic dolls with painted on eyes, ugly dolls with matted synthetic hair, worthless plastic dolls, all of which bear the scars of battle. Arms and legs are missing; hair is pulled out — all had once done something like walk or talk but thanks to dead batteries or broken parts they are now immobilized.

"This is the dumbest doll," the littlest girl proclaims in a shriek. "It don't do nothin' since Ron ripped the motor outta it," announced the biggest one. "Let's kill it," fantasized the middle girl, putting in her penny's worth.

True, the doll had once walked. Unfortunately the scientist in the lad had gotten the best of him. And the lad had gotten the best of the doll: the motor.

"Dumb doll, dumb doll," the girls shrieked as they kicked it across the room. Suddenly the children grew quiet with apprehension as Mother walked numbly into the room. Expecting to be scolded, the children were surprised when Mother called them to her in a quiet, controlled voice. She began to tell the children about the cast iron horse, the china doll and the potbelly stove. She also explained how they could, and should, take better care of their toys so they could pass them on to their children. When they displayed responsible attitudes, Mother also explained, the china doll in the cedar chest would be theirs to play with.

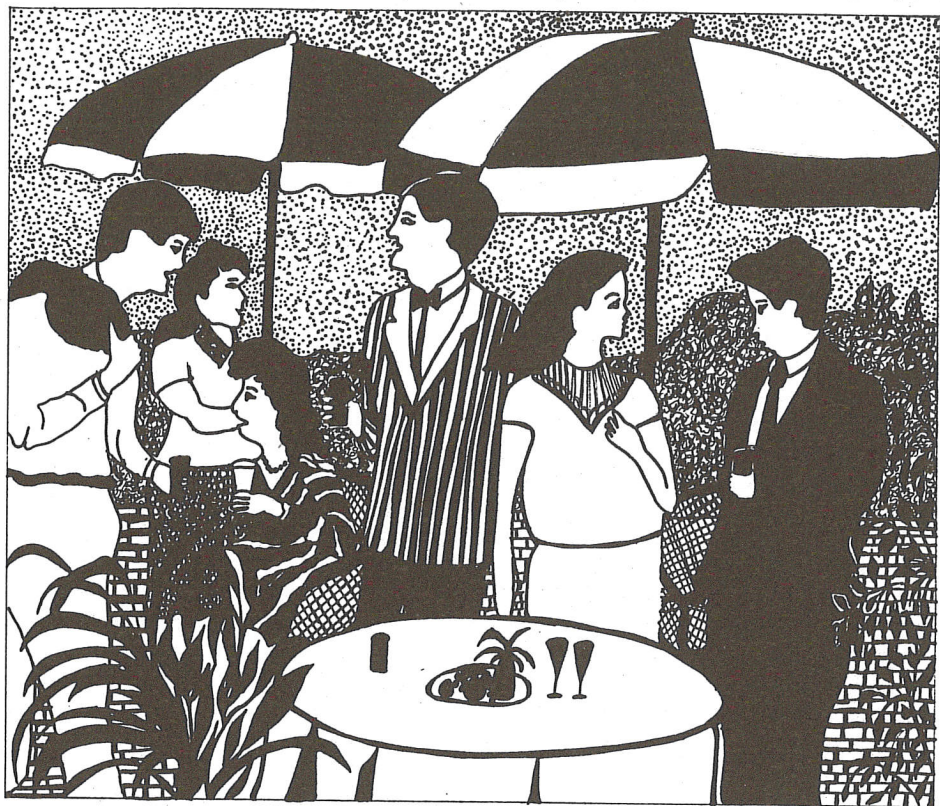
Mother's words were temporarily wasted on their young, modern ears. Although they looked forward to the doll, they had not the ability to understand hardship or how to treasure something. They wondered why anyone would want to save a heap of broken plastic toys.

In 1985, shortly after New Year's, I was busy packing away the last of the Christmas things. Carefully I washed grandmother's etched bowl and cookie plate and put them high on a shelf out of the children's reach. In the other room I heard the annoying sounds of my niece's talking doll and an electronic doll that plays nursery rhymes. In the basement a large pasteboard box was full of broken plastic toys and countless maimed dolls. Dolls made of plastic. Dolls that once were loved, were abused and replaced. Dolls that would soon be thrown away. I thought of the countless toys I had once owned but couldn't really focus in on any one particular thing. Countless characterless toys made to be disposed of along with all our childhood memories. What could I tell my kids our toys were like? What would their toys be like?

The girls began to fight over a doll. The big one had hold of the head; the little one the leg. It was a tug of war. I scooped them up on my lap. "You should try to take care of your things," I told them. "Then someday you can give them to your kids." I told them of the potbelly stove and about great-grandma and grandma and the china doll, . . .

Society, as it progresses on to bigger and better things, overlooks the most important part of human life: the products of our memory and imagination developed in childhood. Today all imagining is done for a child. Nothing is made to be cared for or made to last. Everything is disposable. Toys do everything and leave nothing for the imagination. If a toy doesn't do something, a child thinks, "What good is it?" If a child is surrounded by impersonal, replaceable objects in his early life, will he have value and respect for things in later life? An important part of childhood is lost; a feeling or worth is never developed.

What shape is your memory in?



**GARDEN PARTY**  
**Marcia Ruff**



## I WAS A WRECKLESS NERVE

by Amy J. Sullivan

Brad and I had been dating for about three weeks. We were both aspiring engineers; we liked hot mustard on soft pretzels; we loved lazing on the beach in fair weather or foul, and we both enjoyed watching old W. C. Fields movies. We were a perfect match, or so I thought, until it came time to meet his mother. I had been invited to attend a picnic at the beach with his family, and while I'm not a nervous person by type, meeting parents, especially mothers, can prove to be a nerve-wracking experience.

The day dawned picnic-perfect, a clear blue sky, cool enough to enjoy the sun, yet warm enough to enjoy a swim. Brad picked me up at 9:00 a.m. as planned, and Jenny, his nine-year-old niece, was with him. He told me that he wanted to stop at home to pick up some things his parents wanted us to take to the beach in our car.

Upon arrival at Brad's house, I saw a very young looking woman on the front steps, keeping her eye on an active eighteen-month-old child. I was going to comment on how young his mother looked, when Brad informed me that the young lady was his sister-in-law Mary, and the small child was another sister's daughter, Lisa. I hadn't expected so many relations to be attending the picnic, and I was on the verge of getting very upset, when Brad put me at ease by telling me that he was confident I'd get along well with everyone.

Brad introduced me to Mary, and I smiled what I thought was my most winning smile. She smiled warmly and I gained confidence. Brad and I went inside, and Brad hollered a hello to his mother. We found her in the kitchen, preparing what I guessed was to be our lunch. Brad introduced us while Mrs. Nixon looked me up and down. I felt like my every pore was open to her scrutiny. She seemed skeptical about whether or not I was good enough for her son, so I offered to help make sandwiches, remembering that offering to help makes a good impression. At the time, I had no idea I would later regret my act of kindness. Mrs. Nixon said she was glad for the help, and she proceeded to get out mayonnaise, mustard, lettuce, bread, and bologna.

First of all, Mrs. Nixon couldn't decide how many sandwiches to make. When I asked how many people were going with us, it took her approximately three times to count on her fingers to finally come up with the number ten. She'd rattle off names, then ask me if she had counted someone twice, or missed someone. Being unfamiliar with the family, I didn't have a clue. Mrs. Nixon seemed to be annoyed by this, and it was about this time that I noticed Brad had disappeared. I had to fight very hard to hold down my panic under his mother's sharp gaze.

She finally decided on fourteen sandwiches after I mentioned I would eat only



half a sandwich. Mrs. Nixon wasn't very happy about that, but she did say that Lisa would probably eat the other half, so then we were ready to start.

Now we had the big decision of how many mustard and how many mayonnaise sandwiches to make. Mrs. Nixon asked if I put butter on my sandwiches, and I was just about to say that yes, I did like butter, when she said that she never put butter on because it wasn't good for you. (It's amazing how quickly one's tastes change under Mrs. Nixon's influence.) Mrs. Nixon couldn't seem to decide how many mustard and how many mayonnaise to make, so I suggested we make seven of each. This seemed like a very logical solution to me, but Mrs. Nixon wasn't satisfied. She had to go through the process of counting on her fingers, who liked mayonnaise, and who liked mustard. I was just thanking God that we had only one kind of meat to work with, when she worried that everyone might not like bologna! I tried to assure her that they all would eat bologna, when she shouted outside, asking Brad's nieces if they liked bologna. Of course one of them yelled back that no, she didn't, she wanted peanut butter and jelly. Mrs. Nixon looked at me with a look that said, "I told you so," and I wished Brad would hurry up and join us.

Brad's mother gave me directions on where to find the peanut butter before she left the room. I was searching the cupboard when I heard her yell at me to get out of the cabinet. My hand froze and I felt my neck burning. I had this sinking feeling that I never should have gotten out of bed. I turned around to face her wrath, when I saw her spanking the dog and dragging him out of the garbage. I felt such a sense of relief that she was yelling at the dog and not me that I thought things might actually go more smoothly. Unfortunately, I was horribly mistaken.

As we prepared to make the fourteen sandwiches (five mustard, eight mayonnaise, and one peanut butter and jelly), I was scolded for putting on too much mustard, not enough lettuce, and not covering the bread to the edges. By this time I was nearly in tears for the mess I was making. All my intentions of making a good impression seemed to vanish in Mrs. Nixon's presence. We finally got all fourteen sandwiches made when Brad's mother decided we should put another piece of bologna on each one. By this time I should have learned to keep quiet, but my judgment must have vanished with my good intentions, because I had the gall to say that I only wanted one piece of bologna on my sandwich. I received a disapproving glare from Mrs. Nixon as I cut a piece of meat in half and placed both halves on one side of a sandwich. I assumed that while I ate one half of bologna, Lisa could eat three halves. Brad's mom really flew off the handle at that stunt. She told me that Lisa couldn't possibly eat all that, so with shaking hands, I removed the piece of bologna. I didn't know what to do with the extra half, and since Mrs. Nixon had her back turned, I surreptitiously fed it to the dog. When Mrs. Nixon turned around, she was looking at our cutting board, and she finally asked me what I'd done with the other piece of meat. Well, there was no way I was going to tell her that I'd fed it to the dog, so I lied and told her I had decided to eat it after all. Then she looked in my sandwich! Of course it wasn't between the slices of bread, so I revised my lie, and said I'd eaten it just then. She looked me up and down again as if she could see inside my stomach, and I wished desperately for Brad to return. As terrible as I felt, I was happy that all that was left to do was to cut the sandwiches and put them in plastic baggies. I never would have thought that such a simple chore could be turned into such a fiasco.

I cut the first few sandwiches in half, starting at the top and cutting parallel to the crusts. Mrs. Nixon seemed ruffled by this, since her plan was to cut the sandwiches with mayonnaise, diagonally, and the sandwiches with mustard, across. As the minutes (which seemed more like hours) passed, I was making more and more blunders, and finding them harder and harder to correct. Brad's mother just gave an exasperated sigh and told me it was all right, we could make little labels for them. I thought this was a terrible idea because it meant having to spend more time alone with her in the kitchen. I finally figured that Brad must have known things would turn out like this and had wanted to avoid the pending disaster if possible. My thoughts of him at that moment were far from the loving endearments that usually entered my mind when thinking of my sweetheart.

Mrs. Nixon found some little strips of paper for me to label the sandwiches with, and I proceeded to write out the labels using the abbreviations mayo. and must. Handwriting was never one of my strong points in school (as a matter of fact, my handwriting's infamous reputation carried over from junior high school to high school), and Mrs. Nixon couldn't tell the difference between my mayo's and must's. If there were trophies for expressing exasperation, Mrs. Nixon would have been awarded one for her performance. With another sigh, Mrs. Nixon rewrote the labels and I helped put them on the sandwiches.

Right about the time we were sliding the last label in, Brad showed up, acting surprised that we were done already. I couldn't believe it; I felt like I'd aged three years while in that kitchen.

Brad and I loaded some beach paraphernalia into his car, and I told Mrs. Nixon how nice it was meeting her. (I was lying through my teeth.) After Brad and I were on the road, he asked me how it went; he seemed to think it went wonderfully. I fumed at him for leaving me alone to face his mother. He claimed that he busied himself elsewhere because he was just as worried as I was. I told him that worried was an understatement, and in my flustered state, I told Brad that his mother had made me a wreckless nerve.

Brad and I had a good laugh about my slip, and we still laugh about it today. Even though Mrs. Nixon and I get along much better, she still has a tendency to turn me into a wreckless nerve.!

UNTITLED  
Vicki Morse





## THE DETERIORATION OF NOBLE MINDS

by Josephine Cooper

Shakespeare delves into the nature of the human personality and, particularly in his tragedies, brings out the intermingling of its strengths and weaknesses. He uses significant patterns in developing his plot. A character of high quality, usually a leader, is brought down by the expansion of a flaw within his personality. This malignant flaw influences and alters the character's mind and dictates resultant behavior.

Macbeth and Othello are both portrayed as noble characters early in their respective plays. They were well respected and admired. Ross says to Macbeth, "Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense," and "for an earnest of a great honor, he [Duncan] bade me . . . call thee Thane of Cawdor." (I,iii) Duncan also says of Macbeth, "we love him highly and shall continue our graces toward him." (I,vii) The Duke also speaks highly of Othello, calling him "valiant," and "if virtue so delighted beauty lack, your son-in-law is far more fair than black." (I,iii) Cassio also admires him, "the valiant of this warlike isle, that so approve the Moor!" (II,i) Othello and Macbeth are both respected for their military leadership as well as their personal qualities.

Early in the plays the personality weakness of each noble leader is brought out. For Macbeth it is his greed for power. He listens to what the witches say, and a spark of excitement is ignited in him: "Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more." (I,iii) He ponders what he has heard: "Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor. The greatest is behind." (I,iii) His latent desire for position is aroused, and, even though he knows he's tampering with evil forces, he takes to heart their prediction. For Othello, the flaw is his gullibility as well as his passions. He is attentive to the suggestions made by Iago, "as if there were some monster in thy thought too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something." (III,iii) He believes Desdemona is faithful, yet there's a flicker of doubt. He instructs Iago, "If more thou dost perceive, let me know, more.: (III,iii)

For both, the choice was still theirs. They had the ability to lay these thoughts aside or to nurture them. They each go through a mental struggle yet decide to satisfy the "flaw." Macbeth argues with himself regarding Duncan, "First, as I am his kinsman and his subject . . . his virtues will plead like angels. I have no spur . . . but only vaulting ambition." (I,vii) He recognizes Duncan's worth and his own selfish motivation. Yet, urged on by Lady Macbeth, he carries out the murder of Duncan. Othello, too, goes through a mental battle: "I think my wife be honest, and I think she is not. If she be false, O then heaven mocks itself! I'll not believe it!" (III,iii) He has no reason to suspect Desdemona, except that tiny pebble of doubt. He listens to Iago, and the doubt grows. As evidence is laid before him, he is

convinced it's true, and his passion takes over as he cries, "O monstrous! monstrous!" (III,iii)

As the cancer grows within Macbeth's mind, we see the obliteration of his conscience. This deterioration of a conscience which at one time held him back from killing Duncan later gave him free rein to murder any who stood in his way. He turns into an unchained monster, "I have almost forgot the taste of fears . . . I have supp'd full with horrors; direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts, cannot once start me." (V,v) Macduff finally says of him, "thou bloodier villian than terms can give thee out." (V,viii)

Othello, too, is turned into a monster. Speaking of Desdemona, he says, "I will chop her into messes!" (IV,i) Later he strikes her and calls her a devil. He deliberately plots, with Iago, to have Cassio killed. His plan to kill both of them is the result not only of his rage, but also his passion to see that "justice" is done.

Both tragedies come to their full culmination when each man has his eyes opened to the error in his thinking process and the final results. Just before his death, Macbeth learns how the witches had manipulated the facts to give him false confidence. "Accursed be that tongue that tells me so . . . that palter with us in a double sense." (V,viii) He knows that he has been wrong yet fights Macduff to the end.

Othello also learns painfully of his blindness. "I am not valiant neither . . . but why should honor outlive honesty?" (V,ii) He declares his own judgement, "Roast me in sulphur! wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!" (V,ii) and in the end kills himself.

The tragedies lie not only in the deterioration of these noble minds but the resultant wasting of many lives. A seemingly little flaw got out of hand and grew to monstrous proportions. Yet it could have been prevented. In these plays, Shakespeare elaborates on a universal truth: man is ultimately responsible for his choices and their resulting outcome.



**MONDAY AFTERNOON**  
**John Rich**



## "LILY"

by Suzette Lomasney

It is rare, indeed, that we are privileged to witness a person as he takes a new direction in life. Most people tend to have a certain mindset as they settle into adulthood, and a significant emotional event must occur if they are to come to a genuine self-awareness. In a real sense their present self must give way, or die, in order for their new self to emerge, or be reborn.

Thus, we are fascinated as we observe Gabriel's conversion in James Joyce's "The Dead," while at the same time relating his experience to James Joyce himself. In order to understand Gabriel and Joyce and the change that occurred within them, we must become better acquainted with both of these men. It would seem logical that, since Joyce is the author, we should begin with him.

Irish author James Joyce was in his late twenties when he wrote "The Dead," the last in a collection of short stories entitled *The Dubliners*. This last story is a milestone of sorts because it signifies a change in Joyce's attitudes toward some of the areas in his life which had been a great source of unhappiness and frustration to him. He agonized over his disillusionment with Ireland, and Dublin in particular, as well as his alienation from the Catholic Church and the problems he had with the major relationships in his life.

After finishing all of the stories except "The Dead," Joyce admits that he has been remiss in describing Ireland, and Dublin, in such a poor light. He himself describes his writing as having a "scrupulous meanness" about it (O'Brien p. 251).

Ireland is a great country. It is called the Emerald Isle. The metropolitan government, after centuries of strangling it, has laid waste. It's now an untilled field. Dubliners are the most helpless, useless, and inconsistent race of charlatans I have ever come across on the island or on the continent (Ellmann p.225).

He likens the Catholic Church to "... a hussy who offers herself among perfumes, songs, flowers, and music, sadly mourning in silken robes on a throne" (Ellman p. 225).

Regarding his family, the former relationships in his wife Nora's life are a constant source of jealousy for him, and he has yet to make amends with his father, John. He has made a tenuous peace with his younger brother, Stanislaus, who, incidentally, is the one responsible for rescuing Joyce from his own folly for years on end. So, with this background in mind, we find Joyce in exile in Rome, rediscovering himself and Ireland.

Gabriel, the protagonist in "The Dead," is much like Joyce. In fact, there are so many details in the story that parallel Joyce's life, a conclusion could be drawn that the story is largely autobiographical. Although much could be written about this, the key similarities that would be helpful to know about are how the two men are alike and how they relate to their wives.

First, the likeness of Joyce and Gabriel: they each have the temperament that causes them to believe "that their wives and sweethearts will betray them" (Ellman p. 256). In addition, they have the same attitudes about Ireland and the Church, and they see themselves as basically innocent in all of the complicated situations that they become a part of. Gabriel's physical appearance is also likened to Joyce, parting his hair in the middle and wearing wire-rimmed glasses. Reviewing books for a pro-English newspaper is Gabriel's profession as was Joyce's before he exiled himself.

As for their wives, both men are ashamed of the fact that their wives are from the west of Ireland, an area that is thought to be rural and backward. Joyce and Gabriel experience ego-shattering encounters with Nora and Gretta respectively, which precipitates much soul-searching on their part.

To obtain a more complete picture of Gabriel we find this comment:

Gabriel has a sense of a richer European culture tradition. He holds this against the culture in which he lives. He has the same sense of the vulgarity and banality of those around him and a superior vision that looks down on people (Brown, p. 91).

It seems that both Joyce and Gabriel have a long way to go in attaining a true consciousness of themselves, a consciousness that will enable them to make a change in their lives that will make them more compassionate, less complacent and more loving. And what starts them on their journey? What is the catalyst that initiates their self-awareness?

In Joyce's case, there are a number of events that have a common thread, bringing him to one conclusion. It seems that Joyce discovered that before he met Nora, she had been in love with a young man, Sonny Bodkin, who had died as a result of tuberculosis. This in itself was cause enough for jealousy, but the poor Bodkin's demise was hastened because he, upon finding that Nora was leaving for Dublin, went out in the rain to sing to her and tell her good-bye. Joyce had a hard time competing with someone who was dead, and basically felt that "... the dead do not stay buried" (Ellman p. 253).

He subsequently heard an Irish ballad that told of the jealousy of the dead for the living and associated it with his jealousy for Sonny Bodkin. All of these feelings culminated when Joyce acknowledged how he felt about Rome. The ancient ruins and a reverence for things of the past were inescapable; he couldn't help but feel that the dead were trying to take over the living.

All of these events cause Joyce not only to re-evaluate his feelings for Nora, but he also reassessed his relationship with Ireland. He finds a greater sympathy for his wife because he is made more aware of himself. This is due to the loss of part of his ego as a result of the discovery that he isn't the only one in Nora's life. It is a very humbling experience for him as it would be for anyone. It is only natural that

he would then think about the love-hate relationship he has with Ireland. Hence, in writing "The Dead," Joyce is atoning for the fact that he has been so harsh toward Dublin in particular, and Ireland in general.

But what of Gabriel? What happens to him to create an "awareness that promises renewal" (Tindall p. 46)? We find Gabriel and his wife, Gretta, at his aunts' annual Christmas dance. He is, as usual, filled with self-importance and a complacency toward the assembled group and his wife. Just before leaving, Gretta hears an Irish tenor singing a ballad from the west of Ireland and is immediately pensive. Upon leaving, the couple goes to a hotel for an abbreviated second honeymoon but the unexpected occurs. Gretta admits to Gabriel that her sadness is due to the fact that she has heard a ballad that reminds her of her dead lover, Michael Fleury. Michael died of tuberculosis (as did Sonny Bodkin after singing to Nora in the rain before her departure to Dublin). When Gabriel asks Gretta specifically how he died, she answers, "I think he died for me" (Joyce, p. 543). At this point Gabriel realizes that Gretta has felt a passion for Michael that she has never felt for him. He senses that her comparing him to Fleury "... means not only a loss if his singularity, his uniqueness, but also the failure of his self-possession" (Brown p. 97). In other words, Gabriel has suffered such a shock that his whole sense of self has changed, or died. We will never be the same again. He resolves to be more sympathetic toward Gretta and starts thinking of what Ireland and the people in his life really mean to him. In fact, while looking at Gretta asleep, his eyes fill with tears and he at last knows love.

To further support the death and rebirth idea, we refer to the most cryptic sentence in the story, "The time had come for him to set out on his journey Westward" (Joyce p. 545). Every literary critic commenting on the story has an interpretation of what Joyce meant by this statement, and most agree that it has to do with the death of Gabriel's self-possession and a new beginning for him.

Joyce himself had come to the realization that he was thoroughly justified in his flight from Ireland but he didn't know where he was supposed to flee. "He had learned to be a Dubliner in Rome and would forever feel humiliated when someone attacked Ireland" (Ellman p. 261). He was never to feel the same hostility toward Ireland from that point on.

What a truly beautiful thing to watch — a person letting go of the negative aspects in his life and finding himself fresh and new. One critic profoundly summed it all up with this analysis of Gabriel's rebirth:

But on this night he comes face to face with his predecessor and with his own self, with the past that has claimed all the others and the future that he has betrayed in order to maintain his comfortable position on the outside. "... journey Westward" indicates his awareness of his new responsibility.

Gabriel must begin the quest of self-discovery to arrive at the real epiphany — to follow his star. After many false starts of self-deception, the "rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches toward Bethlehem to be born." (O'Brien, p. 52)



If each of us had the opportunity to experience our own personal resurrection, the world would be better for it.

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TRACE I

Tracy Griffor

## A LEAK IN THE ROOF

by Roberta Leuth

There's a leak in the roof.

The north wind is driving the rain up under the chimney flashing;  
there's water dripping down the bricks  
and running along the diagonal beam.

It's seeping onto the light fixture in the upstairs hallway  
making a brown stain along the ceiling crack  
running down both sides of the brass lamp shade  
and dripping simultaneously onto the carpet and the stairs.

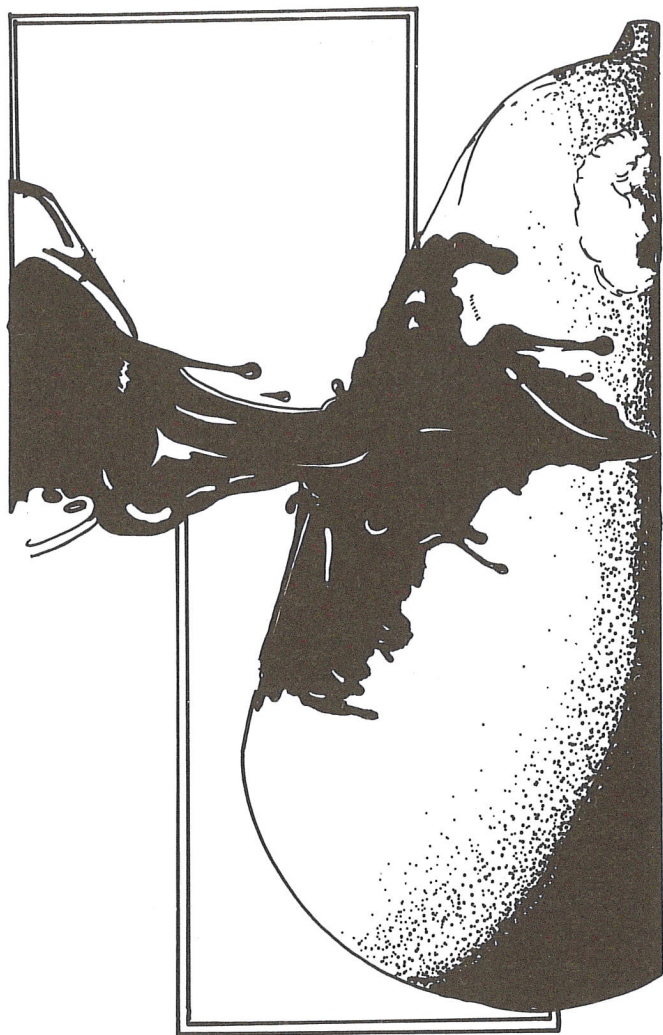
The roof leaks.

Eventually it will stop raining, or blowing, or both.

We can tar around the chimney one more time  
if we get a warm enough day, now, in mid-November.  
That might work another season.

But we're looking a homeowner's loan right in the eye  
one big enough for a new roof  
insulation and a vapor seal  
attic fans and removing the old chimney.

Already the brown stain on the hallway ceiling has seeped downstairs  
and left its messy stain in our bankbook.



**CHOCOLATE**  
**Chuck Yates**



## THE RACE

by Daniel F. Gorzen

I would like to give special thanks to Mark Saunders who  
raced in the Enduro at Mt. Clemens Speedway and  
to my mother who help me with my syntax.

After the official fired his gun, the noise of the unmuffled engines wiped the sound of the shot from the air. Before that shot, only the hollow sounds of individual engines broke the hush of the summer night; and after it, the pack of engines surrounded me so completely with their screams that I felt as if I were sitting in one of the cars racing around the track.

I watched carefully for Mark's car, number 74, and when I saw it pass, I stood up and yelled out to him, but he probably didn't hear or see me. On the track he couldn't see the endless procession of cars squirting around the track like blood cells pounding through a tiny vein. All Mark could see from inside his gutted '74 satellite was the handful of mangled cars that he was dueling with at the time, and the totaled cars that stuck to the edges of the asphalt strip impeding the circulation of the other cars.

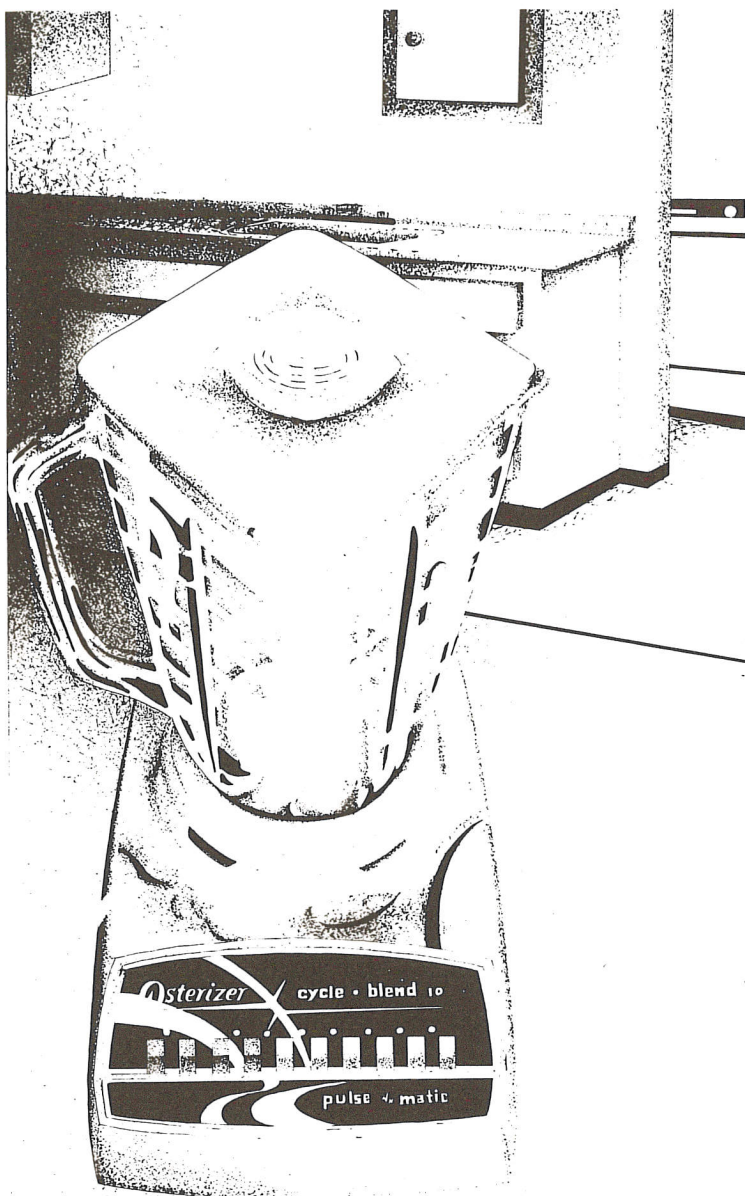
The fumes of exhaust and burnt rubber rose and surrounded the white halogen lights in a wispy aura that connected into a glowing canopy over the track. The roar of the engines seemed to echo from that canopy of haze as if it were a solid dome covering the track and severing it from the rest of the world.

Just as in the real world the only law that governed the race was the law of survival: those contestants who survived were the victors, and those who didn't were the losers.

We will always race. We will race cars, cockroaches, and camels; every victory feeds our egos and makes us bigger. Our collective victories push us higher and higher above the other animals and closer to the gods.

We may lose the race, and from the height that we have elevated ourselves we have further to fall. The arms race, the space race, and even the rat race that we face daily accelerates our race towards the grave.

In the end Mark didn't win, but he was victorious — he survived.



UNTITLED  
Pheth Sayavong

## BOUQUETS FOR MY TEACHER

by Mary Joann Hayes

Recipient of the second Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award

Good teachers, be they male or female, need the nurturing instincts of good mothers; it is the first prerequisite of their craft. And make no mistake, teachers are craftsmen. They mold the sometimes unwieldy clay of thought, intellect, emotion, and ideas into some semblance of order to help their students to think for themselves, while at the same time teaching their particular subject. That this job is not easy is one of the great understatements. Unlike the mother and other craftsmen, the material teachers work with is already partly formed by others. College professors have the hardest job of all because they are the finishers. They try to correct mistakes made along the way by others, knocking off rough edges and smoothing sharp corners. If they are very good, they open minds already closed with new thoughts, ideas, and ways of looking at life. Susanna Defever is such a teacher.

No youngster entering school for the first time was more frightened than I as I walked into Mrs. Defever's English 101 class in the fall of 1981.. I was a forty-nine year-old grandmother returning to school after a thirty year hiatus as a homemaker, unsure of my decision to do this thing. Before Mrs. Defever was through with me, she would become my mentor, my friend and confidante, as well as my favorite teacher. The journal she insisted we keep was a big reason for this. It became my daily habit to write my thoughts, ideas, and activities, almost like a diary. Once a month Mrs. Defever collected these journals to read what we had written. Reading her comments on what I had written became like a treasure hunt for me. She wrote little notes in the margins, at the top of the page, and alongside what I had written, anywhere she could find room. She used a pen with green ink to write amusing comments and encouragement to my further writing. They were like the first hopeful sprouts of spring to this unsure, frightened student. I was left with the warm feeling that I mattered to her, and that what I had written was worth reading.

I have tried many times to analyze just what Mrs. Defever did in class to awaken her students. For this life of me, I can't pin it down to any one thing and say, "There, that's it; that's how she does it." I believe it's not so much what she does, as what she inspires her students to do. She is really very tricky in how she accomplishes this. I took three English classes with her, and in every one she turned the class into a family after about two weeks. She taught us to care about each other. She read provocative things in class that fairly forced a response from us, so that we had to interact. Discussions begun in class often continued in the hall after the class was dismissed. If she gave a particularly difficult assignment,

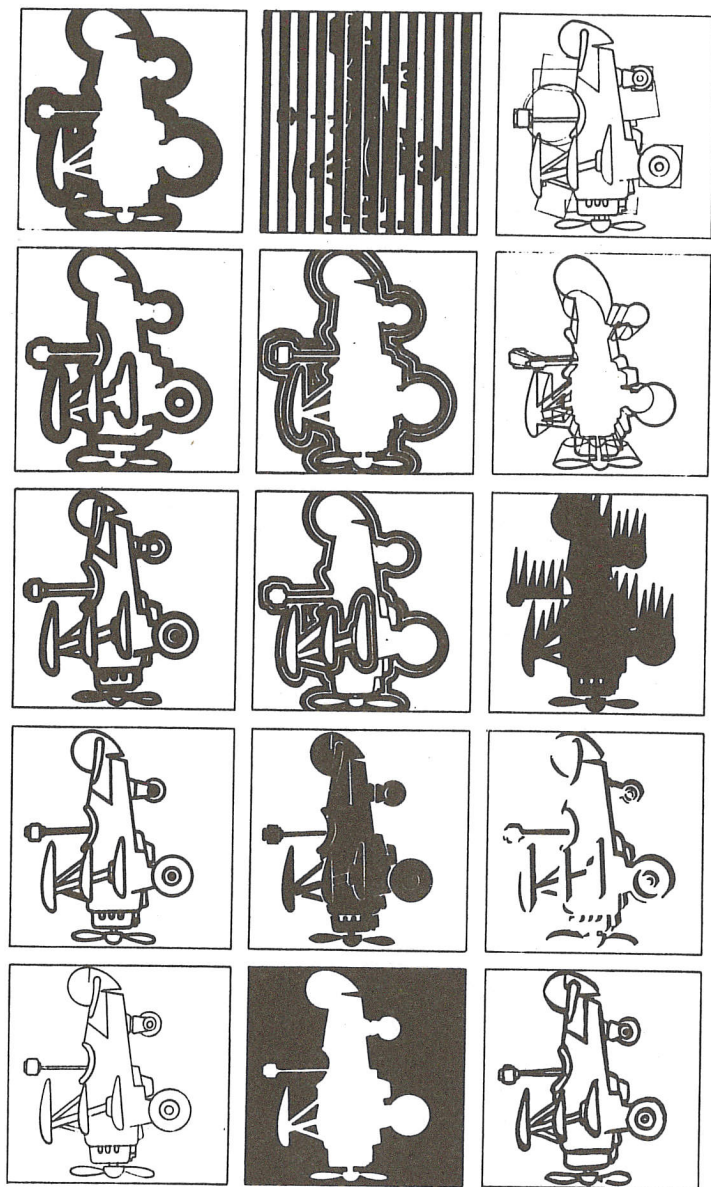


she would bring carefully chosen books and articles to help specific students. Before long we were bringing things to class for each other. Like a very wise mother, she didn't make herself indispensable to us. Instead she showed us how to help ourselves and then each other.

There are many things for which I thank Mrs. D. I am most grateful for her introduction to authors I would never have read on my own. Plato, Plath, Faulkner, and T.S. Eliot were names I knew, but I had never read anything they had written. Who read such dry stuff anyway? I did . . . for Mrs. Defever's class! I remember my astonishment when I not only read but also understood Plato's "Myth of the Cave." I fell in love with Faulkner's logic and sense of fair play in his short story, "The Bear." I even could relate to Eliot when he used the line about measuring out our lives with coffee spoons in his poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Mrs. D. was tolerant when I complained that I didn't like some of her selections on the reading list. She said I had to read them anyway "for the good of my soul." She dared me to see other points of view that I would never agree with but that I could at least try to understand.

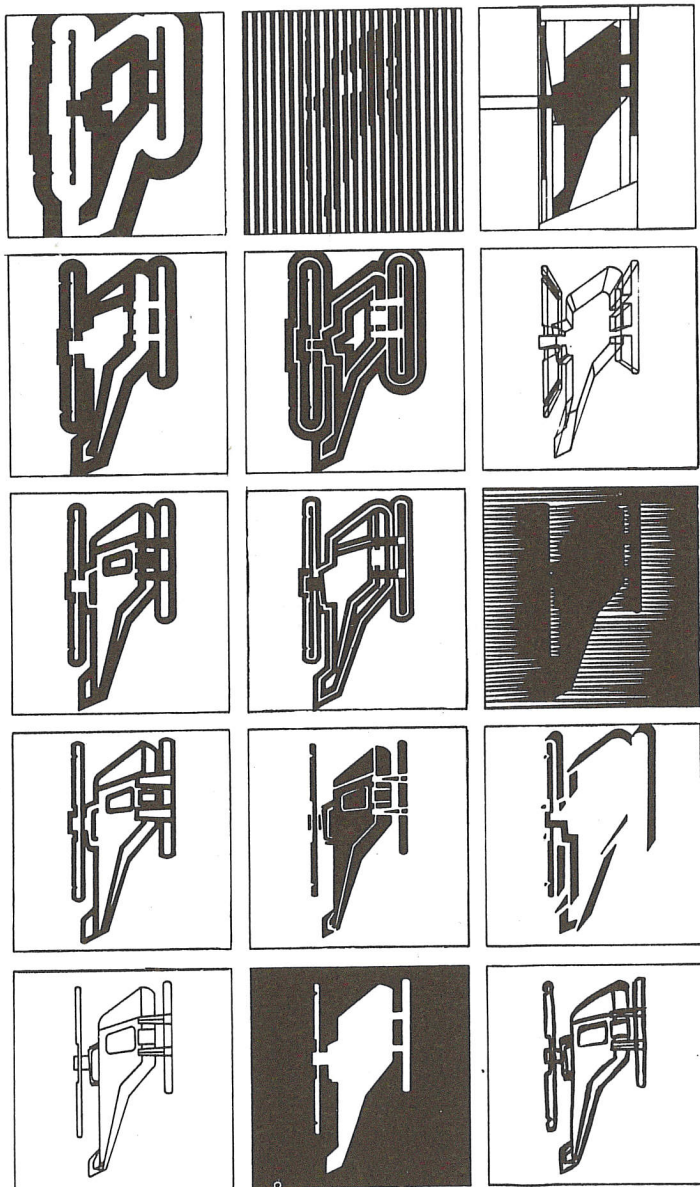
Mrs. D. approaches her craft as teacher like an explorer leading an expedition. She begins by taking her fellow adventurers over trails she knows well, even showing them false trails she has traveled. She opens their eyes to glimpses of vistas explored by others and hints at new paths that are as yet unexplored. Her students stick close to her side at first. Then they begin to take tentative steps on their own, only to find her there spurring them on further when they return to tell her about their discoveries. Her aim is to have them become adventurers on their own without the need of her leadership or encouragement. This happens slowly and almost painlessly, without the feeling of separation, indeed without the knowledge of just when she left them to go on their way alone. And so I return from my journeying to thank my mentor, my leader, my friend. Thank you, Mrs. Defever, for carrying me until I could crawl, holding my hand until I could walk alone, and thank you for setting me free to learn to be my own person. I know you do not expect bouquets from me, but I give them gladly to you for being what you are, a teacher.

*Note: Joann Hayes graduated from SCCCC in 1984 with an associate's degree in Child Care/Youth Services. Having had her work published with first place honors in two issues of **Patterns** and having won the Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award, she pursued her love of writing for and about people by answering an ad in **The Richmond Review** and becoming a news and special feature writer.*



TRI-PLANE  
Claire Edwards

# 15 HELICOPTERS Linda Harmon



## THE ELEANOR B. MATHEWS WRITING AWARD

In 1983 the family and friends of Eleanor B. Mathews established an annual writing award in her honor. Mrs. Mathews is well remembered as one of the finest instructors at Port Huron Junior College/St. Clair County Community College. She taught English, especially classes in creative writing and poetry; served the college and community in many ways, including department chairperson and mentor for senior citizen writers, and had her own work published in numerous magazines and journals. For years she was the guiding force behind the yearly publication of *Patterns* following the retirement of its founder, Blanche Redman. The writing award was established both to recognize and to encourage excellence in student writing.

The monetary award is to be given to the student who, in the estimation of the English faculty, has submitted an entry to the annual *Patterns*' competition, which exhibits outstanding creativity, technical skill, and individual style. The cash award may be divided among more than one recipient.

The first recipient was Stephen W. Strobbe, who studied creative writing with Eleanor Mathews and who received many awards for poetry and essays published in various issues of *Patterns*. Last year he honored SCCCC poetry lovers with a special reading of his work at the *Patterns* reception. An audio tape of this session is available in the SCCCC LRC as is a tape featuring Eleanor Mathews reading and discussing her poetry. The second recipient was Mary Joann Hayes whose personal and literary essays received publication honors in two issues of *Patterns*. She is now writing for the *Richmond Review*.

This year's recipient, Roberta Lueth, is the first student writer in the history of *Patterns* who has entered and has had work selected for publication in all four categories in the same year. Identities of student authors are not known to the judges during their reading and evaluating of compositions; all work is numbered. Only when scores have been tabulated and decisions reached do the judges learn who has written the winning entries. The results of this year's competition left no doubt as to the winner of the third E.B. Mathews Award. Ms. Lueth's work took both first and second place honors in poetry, first place honors in literary essay, and second place honors in short story. One of her personal essays was also selected for publication as were two additional poems.

Ms. Lueth is married and lives with her family on a farm in the St. Clair area. She



is a creative and versatile homemaker; a keen devotee of nature, spending hours observing and recording details about the natural world, and an excellent student at the college. She takes her writing seriously, revising each piece many times.

Ms. Leuth, with her perceptive insights, her telling details, and her excellent use of language, epitomizes well the outstanding student of creative writing. She is equally adept in the writing of imaginative poems and stories as in the writing of informative, interpretative essays. Her writing demonstrates not only creativity but careful use of language skills. She takes an artist's view of detail, color, and mood with her selection and arrangement of words. Her subjects reveal her ability to observe, select, reflect, and project ideas and concepts so that readers not only see what she has seen but consider, perhaps, a different point of view. In the tradition of the noted English author Joseph Conrad, Ms. Lueth, by her "power of the written word," makes readers see and also gives them "that glimpse of truth" about life. It is a pleasure for the English faculty to honor the unique, diverse talents of this outstanding student writer.

## COMMITTEES

### *Art*

Patrick Bourke      John Henry      David Korff  
Earl Robinette

### *Writing*

Sylvia Bargiel      Richard Colwell      Susanna Defever  
Kathleen Nickerson      Fred Reed      Edsel Rintala

### *Production*

Patrick Bourke      Susanna Defever      Tom Sicklesteel  
Jim Ronan      Tracy Griffor

# **AUTOGRAPHS**







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